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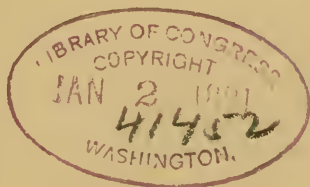
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ODD SPELL VERSES

BY

*Harry
Hitecomb*
H. W. HOLLEY.



BUFFALO
CHARLES WELLS MOULTON
1891

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TO
THE SACRED MEMORY
OF
MY MOTHER

THIS LITTLE VOLUME OF VERSE WRITTEN AT ODD SPELLS
DURING AN ACTIVE BUSINESS LIFE
IS REVERENTLY DEDICATED.

I.

Can I think wicked thoughts,
Can I dream wicked dreams,
With thy purity over me beaming?
With thy motherly eyes
Watching over my schemes,
May their faults not have something redeeming?

II.

As an angel to guide,
Like the light of a star,
Thy dear image is ever before me ;
And my heart without guile
Sendeth worship afar,
And my spirit bows down to adore thee !

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SENTIMENT AND FANCY.

IN MEMORIAM.

All all of my life underlying,
Is still the sweet memory of thee !
More hallowed by time, never dying,
Growing hourly more sacred to me ;
A memory unsullied, untainted,
A remembrance devoid of regret ;
A picture of one truly sainted,
In my heart's inmost recesses set.

Not the grief that succumbs to Time's healing,
Or the memory its change can destroy,
Not an old man's exhaustion of feeling,
Or the fickle heart-sobs of a boy
Are mine, but, like zealot untiring,
Whose altars are ever aflame,
Each act, word, thought, deed or desiring
Of life is inwrought with thy name.

What thou hopedst I might be, I endeavor
With all my best efforts to be ;
Death claimed thee, yet death does not sever
Thy guardian spirit from me ;
I hear still thy Mother's-lips saying,
“ Look up where the brighter stars shine.”
Thus oft, from the cold grave's decaying,
Thy soul, as of old, speaks to mine.

Thus ever above me are shining
Thy precepts with spiritual light ;
To the cloud o'er my soul, silver lining ;
On my dark'ning path, radiance bright ;
From the skies, a soul-ray that will never
To the boy, whom thou worshipedst, grow dim ;
From the dead past a Mother's endeavor
To smooth life's rough journey for him.

With my motives of action grown clearer,
This thought brings me fiercest regret,
That life's labor hath brought me no nearer
To the ideal mark by thee set ;
If my heart over failure is fretting,
Ah Mother the most which I rue,
The pang that leaves deepest regretting,
Is that I to thy hopes am untrue ;

Is that I in this conflict have lost them,
The wreaths which thy fond heart believed
Would crown me at last ; or have tossed them
Away with neglect while thou grieved ;
Still drifting on pitiless ocean,
Though the voyage now so nearly is o'er ;
Ere it ends, let me voice my devotion,
My love for thee, Mother, once more :

Let me breathe to the winds my confession,
This thought that so eases my pain,
That ever upon my transgression
Has the soft touch of Memory lain.

IN MEMORIAM.

3

Still hoping, and blessing, and guiding,
Is the gleam of thy love from afar
In the heart that so loved thee abiding,
To his darkness the light of a star.

INSPIRATION.

Down in a valley where Nature reposes,
Lately there wandered one seeking content ;
Plucking 'mong briars that clambered there roses,
Breathing sweet fragrance wherever he went.
Mosses and ferns and most beautiful grasses,
Nature's own carpet, lay under his feet ;
Beauty in tangles, in clumps and in masses,
Bloom without culture, yet wondrously sweet.
Over his head limbs of forest trees bending,
Fancy a canopied tapestry weaves ;
Sunshine and shadow alternately blending,
Silence of worship and rustle of leaves ;
River that silently ever is flowing,
Bearing its burdens, wherever they be,
Onward, and onward, and onward still going,
Till they are buried and lost in the sea.
Here in his search did the dreamer betake him ;
Here, as he searched, he was hoping to find
Genii to comfort, to cheer, or to make him
Unto the ills that surrounded him blind.
Here did he breathe without list'ner his story,
Voice a regret that had never been told,
Plaint of a life that had fought without glory,
Legend of sadness and madness unrolled ;
Here did he voice his regret over failure,
Over the high aims his youth-time did crave ;

Over the wreck and the ruin of labor,
Waiting,—mere débris,—the shroud of the grave.
Nothing for him left from struggle so dreary
To speak to some other this life was not vain,
To solace none grieving, encourage none weary,
Take the load from no shoulder, the sting from no pain.
Oh, desolate thought ! was he coward or craven
To stand thus appalled at this destiny thrust
On soul that had yearned so, a tombstone engraven
With birth, name and age, nothing else left but dust ?
Was it so ? In his bosom the impulse came welling,
The passionate impulse, the eager desire,
The strong inspiration for truthfully telling
The pitiful story of wallow and mire,
The pitiful story of human compassion,
Of women by means of starvation betrayed,
Of merit that's tested by fortune or fashion,
Of scales where an honest pound never is weighed.
So now, as he wandered where Nature in beauty
Mixed up with her roses the briar and thorn,
He met, not content, but the genii of Duty,
Who told him to speak and the poet was born.

DREAMLAND.

Into the Summer sky listlessly gazing,
 Dreaming by daylight a beautiful dream,
Turreted castles from fleecy clouds raising,
 Where I betake me, a monarch supreme ;
On the rapt soul no trace of a sorrow,
 Over the vision no shadows are flung ;
No gloomy fears of disaster to-morrow,
 Linger these glories of dreamland among.

Hushed is the wild din of life's busy clangor ;
 Quiet is brooding o'er earth, air and sea ;
Life's dreary routine, work, restlessness, anger,
 Comes not to harass or disquiet me.
Glorious to breathe the sweet breath of immortals,
 Freed of life's attributes, sorrow and pain ;
Ah ! they who enter these ideal portals
 Never come back to the real again.

O ! the great world in its wonderful splendor,
 With these bright day dreams has naught to compare ;
Nothing to give like the ecstasy tender,
 Which the rapt dreamers in fairyland share.
Fie on the hunt for a name and its glory !
 Fie on success and its answering bliss !
You take the years which shape heroic story,
 Give me the rapture of moments like this ?

Here among clouds, if you choose to deride me,
Fool-like I may be but happy I sit ;
Angels above me, below me, beside me,
In the warm love-light, of memory flit !
Scoff, if you choose, me thus listlessly dreaming,
Riding the sky in my chariot of gold ;
To your heart seared by life's every-day scheming,
Never has been such enchantment unrolled.

Scoffer, forsooth ! your sneer of derision,
Proudly accepted, I wear as a crown ;
Scoffer, forsooth ! when pleasures Elysian,
Lavishly on my day-dreamings come down ;
Scorn, if you choose, me, with glance, lip and finger,
Yet I must float down the beautiful stream ;
Still 'mong its castles enchanted I linger,
Still 'neath the blue sky delighted I dream.

Fie on the race for the gold-bearing mountains,
The years of unrest for the glittering spoil,
The head's cruel schemes, and the hearts dried-up fountains,
The nights of unrest, and the long days of toil,
The conscience all seared to the sweet call of duty,
The usurer's coffers, the conqueror's crown !
O ! dreamland, one glimpse of thy wonderful beauty
Hath torn from my altars these base idols down.

CONFIDENCE.

It brings to us both bliss and pride,
When fortune's smilings leave us,
To know there's nestling at our side,
One who will not deceive us,
To know, however bleak the sky,
However dark and chilling,
Sharing our grief, one still is nigh,
With cheerful heart and willing ;

To know there is an anxious care
In one breast ever glowing,
Chasing our footsteps everywhere
In this wide world they're going ;
Courage that whatever ill
O'er us may frown will dare it,
Till we are rescued, or until
It lifts the load to share it ;

To know, no matter how the storm
Of life may beat above us,
One breast there is, with feelings warm,
That does not cease to love us ;
A willing hand to soothe our pain,
That tries our grief to lighten,
When every effort seems in vain
To break the bonds that tighten.

To know that, when towards our home
Our truent feet are turning,
Eyes that watch to see us come
With joy are truly burning ;
To know, in absence, one fond brain
With prayer is ever teeming,
And sends us o'er and o'er again
Caresses in its dreaming ;

To know the viper's slanderous hiss
In one ear finds no hearing ;
To know that we a Judas kiss
From one need not be fearing ;
To know that words of love and truth
By one are frankly spoken,
And that the sweetest dream of youth
Remains to us unbroken ;

To know, despite of change or chance,
One star retains its splendor ;
The love-light of our youth's romance
Still shining pure and tender ;
One soul among the false still true,
With old devotion keeping
Its watch, o'er all that's dear to you,
With vigilance unsleeping.

What purer bliss than thus to feel
That truth and love together
In one breast constant guard our weal,
In storm or pleasant weather ?

What man, world-worn, that does not fling
His homage true before her,
And come with zealot offering
To worship and adore her?

Indeed that man a fool must be
Who finds the sweet tie galling;
Who pines for greater liberty,
Or deems home ties enthralling;
Who can the bond of love forget,
And crush life's best emotion,
Or think there's something dearer yet,
Than a true wife's devotion.

HOME CHARITY.

Why go o'er the ocean, giving
Foreign beggars needed alms,
With so many paupers living
At our doors with outstretched palms?

There are thirsty deserts nearer
Than Sahara's wilderness,
And o'er them our way is clearer,
Yet our duty none the less.

There is many a bitter grieving
In the hovel o'er the way ;
Many a pang for our relieving
Cometh to us day by day.

Hungry want our feet embraces,
And before our doorways stand
Neighbors, with beseeching faces,
Asking pittance from our hand.

'There are thousands sick and weary
Near us whom the heathen might
Pity for their fortune dreary,
In this land of Christian light.

Every day before us presses
Crowd deserving precious gift ;
Why go seeking far distresses
When such burdens we might lift ?

Unto duty's call replying,
Need we go beyond the sea?
Why not first let hands be trying
To help nearest misery?

Why not first let heart be beating
For our neighbor, ere we roam?
Why abroad send warmth and greeting,
And our coldness keep at home?

A DAY DREAM.

All the fancy, all the feeling
Of the heart or of the brain,
Purest wealth of mind revealing,
Would my lyric might contain ;
Utterance sad o'er buried pleasures,
Youth and beauty for a theme,
Sweet recall in poet measures
Of a long since vanished dream.

Ah ! how bright the links that bound us
Of affections magic chain ;
Ah ! how dear the bonds that found us,
Willing servants of their reign ;
And how sweet again to bring thee
Trivial thoughts in careless rhyme,
And as boyish lover sing thee,
Poems as in olden time !

To walk again beside the river,
Or sit beneath the orchard tree,
Doubting not that God the Giver
Would be kind to you and me ;
Thinking that the dream was real
Which with flowers our path did strew ;
Following blindly Youth's ideal,
Having faith that love was true.

/

In the summer-yacht of Leisure
Floating idly down Life's stream,
Hearts brimful of childish pleasure,
Present bliss and future scheme,
Useless jest and idle singing,
Though old age and wisdom sneer,
Yet, despite them, still are ringing
The old echoes in my ear.

Echoes of the old, old story,
Happy faces all aglow,
Flooding woodland paths with glory,
Arching skies with radiant bow ;
Echoes of young voices blended
With the sounds of rippling stream ;
Youth, by innocence attended,
Basking in Love's brightest beam.

And though vain is all regretting
That long since those hours have flown,
Still for me 'tis sweet resetting
'Mong mind pictures still thine own ;
Sweet to summon fancy, feeling,
Of the heart and of the brain,
Till to me the past revealing,
They restore thyself again.

CONSCIENCE.

Come up to duty ! Conscience is shaking me,
Close by the heart-strings familiarly taking me,
In my ear whispering, perfectly audible,
“Thou must do something at last that is laudable.”

How she persists, I defer it no longer,
Speaking insistent like as if the stronger,
Threatningly hinting me how I'll be treated,
If her design by my action is cheated.

Towards the fulfillment of threats she now hinges ;
Light though they be, these are certainly twinges ;
Memory, too, seemeth bent on inspecting,
Under her eye, what I've long been neglecting.

Eyes that have heterfore been so unheeding,
Suddenly moisten to plaint of the needing ;
Pity goes straight, though she might have done worse things
Into my pocket and opens my purse-strings.

So while the tears and the money are flowing,
This is the truth which I learn worth the knowing,
Whenever Conscience in earnest is teasing her,
Pity the trick has of yielding and pleasing her.

UNWRITTEN LYRICS.

There are lyrics by scores in my heart,
Unrepeated, unspoken, unsung,
Crude lyrics unfashioned by Art,
Borne hourly life's duties among.
Though they find no expression in voice,
They crowd through the portals of thought,
While my senses delighted rejoice
And bask in the happiness brought.

The unwritten songs of the birds,
Translated in lyrical speech,
More potent than eloquent words,
My soul's inmost recesses reach ;
And the rippling voices of streams,
As swiftly their currents flow by,
Send lyrics to people my dreams
In rosy-hued tints of the sky.

Though fruitful the world is of ill,
Of madness, and passion, and blood,
These lyrics, thus haunting me still,
My soul with sweet harmonies flood ;
In their intonations I hear,
Not the crash and the jar of the wrong,
But melody soothing and clear,
Deserving acts mirrored in song.

And many a better desire
In these unspoken lyrics has birth,
Purifying the soul as with fire
From the rust of its contact with earth ;
Warm hopes in the cold heart replacing,
Fresh life where dull weariness lay,
New lines on worn tablets retracing,
Soul-beams for the dullness of clay.

So, too, in these lyrics I meet,
Like whispering zephyrs of June,
The patter of innocent feet,
Word-lisping and racket in tune.
Dear children ! The musical strain,
Flows clear in the lyrics you share,
Love whispered again and again,
Song blended with blessing and prayer.

So these lyrics by scores in my heart,
Unrepeated, unspoken, unsung,
Have become of my being a part,
Though never they fall from my tongue.
Though idle it be the endeavor
In words what they are to reveal,
Still thought holds them sacred forever,
These lyrics unspoken I feel.

LOVE'S LABOR.

Over the sea in a tossing canoe,
Hunting an island afar, go two ;
Island that to their philosophy seems
Filled with the wonderful beauty of dreams,
Where all alone they may wander at will,
Drinking of happiness perfect their fill.
Eager their eyes look afar to discover
Land that to them shall be haven for lover,
Into the web of youth's eagerness weaving
Little regret for the land they are leaving ;

What unto them are the ties left behind them?
Broken have been all the bonds which did bind them !
Into new seas each adventurous lover
Sails in the hope a new world to discover.
Never look back with a shade of regretting,
Never let heart feel a spasm of fretting ;
All the small danger which vexes unminding,
Never let hope have a doubt of the finding,
That when the voyage so adventurous closes,
You will have reached it, the island of roses.

And when at last a few tempests may gather,
And the sea roughens, and darkens the weather,
When you have found that the island so rosy
Is like the mainland most wonderful prosy,
When the enchantment of moonlight and sailing

Gets to the hard work of rowing and bailing,
Then don't forget tho' the sea may be heaving,
Mountain-high billows ; 'tis best the believing
That surely love's labor, sneered often as duty,
Will bring you at last to the island of beauty.

A POET'S DREAM.

It was as late as twelve o'clock,
When sitting in my room alone,
I fancied that I heard a knock
Which sounded very like her own,
And to my question : " Who is there ? "
Replied the rustle of a dress,
And right beside my study chair
She stood in all her loveliness.
" I've come," the witching creature said,
" To bring what you have long desired,
To fill with ecstasy your head,
And make the words you speak inspired.
I've come to show you how to touch
The strings that make divinest song ;
I've come to tell you, O how much
I've planned for you to do so long ! "
The storm was raging fierce without ;
Who cared ? My heaven was in sight.
A laurel with any doubt
Would soon my aching brow delight.
No more should chill these words so cold,
" Your lines, though worthy, are declined."
All which I wrote should bring me gold,
Or what is better, praises kind.
How could I help but love the dear

Sweet creature bringing hope like this?
Why should my vows not be sincere?
And why not seal them with a kiss?
So there our lover life began,
Two mated souls beyond a doubt.
Why can't invention somehow plan
So Hymen's torch will not go out?
Ah, that a dream might ever stay!
At last the sun of morning rose,
And there, stretched out before me, lay
The old rough path, Life's dusty prose.

THEN AND NOW.

These pleasant pictures fresh recall

 The past almost forgotten ;

Again its trials, pleasures all,

 Life's modern stage are brought on.

I dream again, Hope's sweetest dreams,

 Re-read the witching story,

While through the rifts of cloud there streams

 Once more the blue sky's glory.

Ah ! dear friend, vainly do we seek

 Oblivion's fâteful cover ;

We can not build a gravestone bleak

 Life's brightest memories over.

ONLY A FLOWER.

Only a flower, a little wild flower,
Coming from far away over the sea,
Fruit of the tropical sunshine and shower,
Bringing the fragrance of summer to me.
“Only a flower,” this sneering expression
Takes not a whit of its beauty and bloom,
Breath of the Southland, it cometh to freshen
Air of the Northland with fragrant perfume.
“Only a flower,” what gift could be dearer?
Better than this gift what other could be?
One that brings Paradise, coveted, nearer,
Lotus-land springing from out of the sea.

CONSOLATION.

Cease, O heart, thy lamentation !
Why should tears of anguish flow ?
Soul bereaved, this consolation
Should assuage thy bitter woe ;
Ills can her afflict no longer,
Pangs her bosom pierce no more,
Enemies no more may wrong her,
Should we grieve that this is o'er ?

On her sight a dawn is beaming,
Radiant with joy untold.
Would I her with grief unseeming
To this sphere of sorrow hold ?
From the day that has no morrow,
From the joy that has no end,
If I could with tears of sorrow,
Would I wish to bring my friend ?

From the sphere of angel singing,
Where the words of seraphs fall,
Had I back the power of bringing,
Would her footsteps I recall ?
From where life is peace forever,
And where Death hath lost its pain,
Unto this world's mad endeavor
Would I bring her back again ?

While she watches o'er me kindly,
From her home in yonder skies,
'Mong earth's trials groping blindly,
Need I fill the air with sighs?
Should my stupid heart be fretting
That to her hath come release?
Do I prove my love, regretting
That to her at last is peace?

TO MY WIFE.

All thine own ! It comes to cheer me,
Blessed, blessed, blessed word !
When in dreams of night I hear thee,
Every latent pulse is stirred,
Leaps my heart away from sadness.
Light streams o'er my darkened path.
Joy, and hope, and trust, and gladness,
This sweet sentence spoken hath.

What care I for ills that haunt me,
Griefs of life, or freaks of fate ?
Trouble powerless is to daunt me,
While I bear this shield elate.
Over all the cold world's scorning,
Jeering look, or sneering tone,
Shines for me this star of morning.
“ Dearest I am all thine own ! ”

WITH NATURE.

With cautious steps and watchful eye,
And zeal which would discover
Her secret haunts when none are nigh,
That Paradise for lover,
He comes, and as through woodland aisle
His rambling quest advances,
The very air seems charged the while,
With passion's sweet romances.

The woodland paths are filled with light,
A glow of bloom collected,
A radiance more purely bright
Than glint of stars reflected.
The leaves, the flowers, the forest trees,
The brook through coverts winding,
The mountain peaks, the sky, the breeze,
Are guides to help the finding.

Nor should we wonder at the spell,
Which crowns this rapt endeavor,
This ecstasy unspeakable,
Which waits on nature ever.
Ah! they who rightly understand
The secret of exploring,
Find always, in her poppied land,
True idols for adoring.

A FRUITLESS SEARCH.

By the river let us roam,
 Winding through the glade,
Where the forest's leafy dome
 Spreads its genial shade ;
Where the haunts of old invite
 Us, once more, to share
Many a rapturous delight,
 While we wander there.

Let us roam, our hearts as one,
 By affection led,
Where no clouds obscure the sun
 Shining overhead ;

Fling from each saddened breast
 All our cares away,
Feeling feelings long repressed,
 Let us go, I pray.

Where the shadows deepest be,
 On the river's brink,
Lost in thought, let you and me
 If we choose to, think

Of the dreams that gladdened life,
 In the years ago,
Ere its cruel crush and strife
 Seared our feelings so.

Thus two fools, whose hearts did yearn
For the sunshine bright,
Thought perhaps they might return
To the old delight,

But they wandered to and fro,
And their quest was vain,
For content, lost long ago,
Cometh not again.

CHILD GRIEFS.

Two little maids somehow contrived,
One day to get together.
Said one: "I've been so much deprived
Of comforts, I would rather
Sit here beside you, quiet, still,
Than aught else I could mention;
Your sympathetic kindness will,
I'm sure, remove griefs tension."

To this the other one replied:
"I'm glad to hear you speak so;
I too have been of toys denied;
'Tis this that wets my cheek so!"
And so they lay down, then and there,
Without a blanket round them,
Pressed face to face, a sleepy pair,
And thus their mothers found them.

AN ANSWER.

“WHERE shall we land you, sweet?” — *Swinburne.*

Land me where the roses bending
 Lowly kiss the stream ;
Where sunlight and shadow blending,
Through the fragrant buds descending,
Kiss and quiver, while attending
 Eyes of fairies gleam.

Land me where a bank of mosses
 Woos my tired feet ;
Where escaping all my losses,
All life's bitter pains and crosses,
Hands that strike and horn that tosses,
 I may clasp thee, sweet.

A REVERIE.

A summer sky, a radiant sun,
 Upon my pathway shining ;
Beside me dreamland streamlets run,
 Behind me lies repining.
And from this life, so cold and drear,
 My weary spirit turning,
Goes back to greet with love sincere
 The objects of its yearning.
I see the old familiar look,
 The face with friendship beaming,
And read, as I would read a book,
 Thy heart with kindness teeming.
I feel the warm clasp of thy hand,
 I hear the kind word spoken,
The subtle tie, the mystic band,
 That memory keeps unbroken,
The spell that still unites our minds,
 The memories dear that hover,
The ecstasy that reason finds
 In living old days over.
Ah! dear friend of the golden past,
 Beneath this sky of summer,
My heart its thralldom breaks, at last,
 And greets thee, welcome comer.

HOPE,

Flinging its musical mantle around me,
Filling my senses with harmonies sweet,
Ah ! with what fetters of silk it hath bound me,
Out of captivity leading my feet !

Ah ! so persistent did wing of Fate hover,
Life seemed at best but cimmerian night,
Yet through the darkness at last I discover
Suddenly breaking the splendor of light.

Yes, it envelopes me, tenderly flinging
Over my sorrows a mantle of song,
Musical melodies to my soul bringing,
Rescue from anguish that tortured so long.

Who shall the value attach to my dreaming ?
Who shall call worthless these visions unknown ?
May not my soul, compensation redeeming,
Find for its grief in this hope of its own ?

Over Life's struggle, and trial, and sorrow,
Over its seemingly desperate fray,
Still, as a star, shines the hope that to-morrow
Brings to me waiting a fortunate day.

REMORSE.

The stifled accents of an earnest voice,
That speaks within the chambers of the heart
In language audible to him alone ;
The finger ever pointing to the deed
In memory fixed ne'ermore to be erased ;
The sleepless eye that, turn what way he will,
Still meets his own, so calm, so cold, so stern ;
The phantom shape that sits beside his hearth,
Unseen by all the circle gathered there
Save him ; the partner of his daily walks,
That haunts and haunts his steps, until he bears
Upon his brow the self-inflicted brand of Cain.

THE DOUBTER.

A SHADOW.

On the sunshine falls a shadow,
The dark shadow of a fear,
Which the future has in keeping,
For my happinesses here ;
An impending blow to shiver
The shrewd temple I have built,
Where I go to worship reason.
Can such worshipping be guilt ?

In the dreamy sky of fancy
Floats a tiny speck of cloud ;
To the danger which it threatens
Is my troubled spirit bowed ;
From the veil that shrouds the future
Peers a terror to affright ;
And upon the paths of day-time
Stalk the phantoms of the night.

THE LINNET'S WOOING.

Darling, come ! The nest is waiting
We have been so long creating ;
Come, and make me happy, linnet,
Singing your sweet songs within it.
Humming bird, the thrush, the swallow,
Wren and robin, they all follow
In the ranks of envy, dearest,
Just because your voice is clearest.
Who can help it if your singing
Is the wreath of laurel bringing ?
Who can blame it without labor
You surpass your tuneful neighbor ?
Nature's self your crown is wreathing,
'Tis her words your lips are breathing,
Fate decrees, her lips declare it,
Take the crown of song and wear it !
But all this is idle prating ;
While I woo, the nest is waiting.
Come, then, make me happy, linnet,
Singing your sweet songs within it !

TO-MORROW.

“CHANCE and Change,
Dark children of to-morrow.”—*Shelley*.

Unto to-morrow weary eyes
From to-day's sorrows ever turn.
Within the unknown future lies
For all the promised Paradise,
Upon its distant smiling skies
Success and pleasure, twin-stars, burn.

The disappointments of to-day
Are lost amid the waves of hope.
Men brood not over griefs alway,
Perchance a tear, or sob, and they
Uprise to catch the sunnier ray
That gleams from fancy's horoscope.

To-morrow, with its promised freight
For hoping millions, comes at last,
And to the crowd with hearts elate
Who've watched its coming, as of Fate,
It whispers hopeful, cheerful, “Wait
Till one more brief to-day has passed.”

And thus is fed our fierce desire
For something that may never be.
Of this wild chase we never tire,
Forget the past, and still aspire,
Though each to-morrow brings us nigher
Naught but eternity.

IN THE CLOUDS.

Oh, sweet imaginary life,
That fills my soul completely !
Unstained by cold and worldly strife,
Or gross desire, how sweetly
This blest enchantment hangs above
My night and day-time dreaming,
A sky of splendor bright with love,
An earth with rapture teeming !

Is it absurd ? Shall I, ashamed
Of my best thoughts, repress them ?
Shall one who speaks the truth be blamed ?
Need envious hearts distress them ?
Because, forsooth ! I find delight
In dreams that come to cheer me ?
Because Hope lifts the gloom of night,
And thought brings Heaven near me ?

THE DUENNA,
OR
BIRDIE'S EXAMPLE.

Why will you keep foolishly flinging
Your watchful protection o'er me?
Does my darling canary stop singing,
Because of my stupid decree?

Though its wings 'gainst prison-bars flutter,
There ceases my tyrant control;
No wild-bird more freely can utter
The melody born of its soul.

So, Duenna, the law that you set me,
Thus far and no farther to go,
I obey, yet your manacles let me
My heart's sweetest impulses show.

As the cage my birdie's sweet trilling
Can never restrain or suppress,
So custom with decalogue chilling,
Can not my love make for him less.

Though you keep me, Duenna, here hidden,
From him whom I love so remote,
The songs can be never forbidden,
On which my devotion may float.

These beautiful songs I am humming,
O do you not hear them confess,
“O'er valley and mountain I'm coming
To share with thee loving caress”?

And thus with romantic devotion,
The sweetest that love can create,
My soul with ecstatic emotion,
Despite you, embraces its mate.

SONG IS SWEET.

Song is sweet, O, gifted singer,
Every heart-chord it doth wake.
At its shrine we workers linger,
Bound by chains we cannot break.
Beauty fades, the radiant vision
Loses soon its potent sway,
But a voice from realm Elysian
Memory guards from Time's decay.

Song is sweet ; for workers weary
Life is very bleak and cold,
But when sunshine breaks the dreary
Cloud of fate, 'tis fringed with gold.
Blest are tones that make life brighter,
Lifting gloom which shrouds like pall,
Making hearts o'erburdened lighter,
Spreading gladness over all.

Song is sweet, its notes endearing
Have for all a wizard's spell ;
Lift its wand, and lo ! appearing
Visions throng unspeakable.
In the sky new stars are beaming,
Song leads captive listening will,
And away from earth's gross scheming
Soul flits heavenward on a trill.

Song is sweet, from earth upleading,
Rises, soars on angel wing.
Life's dark shadows are receding,
While round distant summits cling
The brilliant hues of glow surprising ;
The heart once more beats warm and strong ;
The dawn is on a new day rising,
And grief and darkness yield to song.

TOO LATE.

Time seemed so long, I once believed
Wealth could be won and then a name ;
But ah ! I find the first achieved
Has quite destroyed the hope of fame.

For time is short instead of long,
And he who once to Mammon kneels
Has lost the power to break the thong
That binds him to its chariot wheels.

Once chained, adieu to poet dreams !
Life's best desires are crushed and stilled,
Until with restless, grasping schemes
Each cell of heart and brain is filled.

And so, when pierced by vague regret
That life to me is death, I come
By stealth to vow allegiance yet,
I find the muse, once worshipped, dumb.

I find too late that she has fled,
Veiling from me her sacred fire,
And in my heart is left instead
Only a miser's gross desire.

A gross desire from day to day
To add more dollars to the pile ;
A business habit I obey
With heart protesting all the while.

Only a miser's gross desire
To live and grow in wealth, ah Fate !
That I should have no motive higher,
Or, having it, should have too late !

I AM WEARY OF LIFE.

I am weary of life ! Hope's banners are furled,
And no longer I strive in the strife of the world.
Over-laden the hours drag wearily on,
And the rapture of struggle and battle is gone.
Desolation of heart, with its withering blight,
Veils the hopes of my youth in the shadows of night.
The stars of my Heaven are all in eclipse,
And joys I express are but lies on my lips.
My life-boat is stranded, a wreck on the shore,
Where wild winds and waters will dash evermore.

I am weary of life ! Why mourn to go hence,
From all of this fustian and silly pretence,
From the sunshine of passion which lures to betray,
From falsehood and anger, despair and decay,
From unceasing struggle, from arrogant anger,
From the many we hate, from the few that are dear,
From heart-rending sorrow, from anguish and pain,
From cowardly taunt, from bravado, disdain ?
'Tis the fool in his heart, ah ! believe me, would say,
I regret from all this I am passing away !

I am weary of life ! What motive to cling
To existence that only such miseries bring ?
Does the gold-hoarded store, does the glare of success,
Make this fever called " Living " have power to bless ?
Have you seen, in some fortunate skeleton's grin,

The proof that it paid him to live and to win?
Ah, drowning soul! why should you clutch at the straws
That float on the surface, — place, fortune, applause?
And the drowning soul answered me: “Weary of life,
I bid without sorrow farewell to its strife.”

“Thank Heaven: the crisis —
The danger is past,
And the lingering illness
Is over at last,
And the fever called ‘Living’
Is conquered at last.” —*Poe.*

RECALLED.

I sit and hold the flaxen tress,
I coil it round my finger.
The ecstasy of happiness
About it seems to linger.

Foreshortened are the weary miles
For me, the heart-sick rover.
This precious lock old Time beguiles,
And bridges distance over.

As I would do, were she but here,
With all her wealth of tresses,
So with both heart and hand sincere
I give this lock caresses.

Among the sweets that fancy sips,
How near to nectar this is,
To cover with my eager lips
This golden lock with kisses.

Ah! sneer at my loving zeal,
Age doth not love disable,
When golden locks like these reveal
The head of baby Mabel.

CHANGE.

The forest walk is just the same,
The streamlet yet is flowing,
As when long years ago I came
With heart elate and glowing,
And wandered, dreaming golden dreams,
The branches spreading o'er me,
And planned to fill with wondrous schemes
The life that lay before me.

But now, with my life's journey done,
My dreaming, scheming over,
I backward come, a wiser one,
Some change here to discover.
In vain ! the streamlet flows here still,
The same old path delights me,
But ah ! I find, despite my will,
My own heart's change affrights me !

A LAMENT.

Thy words of hope no more I hear,
That filled my soul with courage true ;
Thy gentle hand no more is near
To pilot me life's darkness through.

A seal upon thy lips is set,
Thine eyes will never more awake ;
The tears with which my own are wet
Their fearful slumbers can not break.

The silken chord of love that bound
Our souls as one, is torn apart,
And through the depth of grief profound
Alone I journey with my heart.

Yet sweet remembrance comes to cheer
My sad soul with those visions bright ;
Thy loving smile and words sincere
Come back to thrill me with delight.

I treasure up each trifling link,
I try to mend the broken chain,
And lost in thought I sit and think,
And live the dead past o'er again.

In vain ! the joy will not come back,
The first sweet joys of those old days.
Upon my sad soul's weary track
No more will fall those golden rays.

But yet, thank God ! the vow was kept,
Whate'er the storm to cling together ;
Ah ! why could not the wave that swept
One overboard have ta'en the other ?

But no ! They come in such disguise,
Though many joys they separate,
These blessings meted from the skies,
And we must learn to bear our fate.

O heart, be still ! Extract the good,
The useful grains from bitter mass,
And trust, O ! that my sorrow could,
Thy promise that the cup shall pass.

TO FATE

AN INVOCATION.

Come in spirit, come to meet me,
Come with pleasant smiles to greet me,
Come with loving words to bless me,
Lighten cares that so distress me !
Bring the heart that aching misses
What it has so longed for, blisses.
Let no longer hate deprive me
Of the joys that should revive me.

On life's desert bleak and barren
Plant for me the rose of Sharon.
Hopes decayed and withered fancies,
Brighten with old time romances.
Thus the heart is ever beating,
Thus is ever soul entreating,
Thus a luckless victim suing
Asks from Fate her web's undoing.

Vain the hope, for Fate has never
Changed her mind to man's endeavor !
What is wrong, pray, who can right it?
As the war is planned we fight it.
Boast we may, and think we win it,
Still it ends when we begin it
As designed, the Power Supreme
Leads to the goal. Act, hope and dream.

UNSATISFIED.

Tis nature to be longing ; dull or witty,
Or wise or stupid, all desire to range
Forth to the country, back into the city,
Admiring either only for the change.

Weary of noise, my heart is often aching
To 'scape the clatter in the city pent ;
And so each Summer I, my grip-sack taking,
Start out to get away from discontent.

I say to business, "Satan, get behind me,
I'm going off among the happy folk,
Where your blue-devils surely can not find me
To roil my soul with everlasting croak.

"I'm going to snooze beneath the spreading beeches,
And ride at ease in nature's palace-car ;
I'm going to hear the sermons that she preaches
From simple wild flower up to wondrous star.

"From slavish toil thus briefly manumitted,
I'll sniff the odor of the piny woods,
And quite unmindful of the world I've quitted,
Enjoy the rapture of these solitudes."

Thus year on year this false delusion blinds me,
And leads me wandering after country joys ;
But one short month of vain pursuing finds me
With face turned eager toward the city's noise.

DESPAIR.

Despair, you have come to the wrong place to-day
To barter your products of sadness and gloom ;
And knock at my heart's door as hard as you may,
From within to your knock shall the answer be nay,
I open not now since I know unto whom.

You may stand in the rain till it drenches your skin,
And plead for a shelter you never will get ;
Compassion yields not to your clamorous din,
For memory warns me to bar from within
The demon whose footsteps are unerased yet.

I yielded one time, and you entered my heart,
And, pirate-like, robbed me of all of its peace,
Made the world seem a desert, the sunshine depart,
Made God seem unjust with your devilish art,
Till I, in my madness, prayed Death for release.

You hissed in my ear, until charity fled,
“ God loves not his creatures, they live but to die ” ;
You hissed until conscience and reason were dead,
And mangled my sensitive heart till it bled
With anguish, that none were so wretched as I.

You stood between me and the friends who were dear ;
My wife and my children were lost in the gloom ;
I grew blind as you scoffed, 'till you made it appear
That even their love was to me insincere,
And happiness only could come with the tomb.

And now you return, and have knocked to regain
The place in my heart which you darkened before ;
But your pleading for shelter this time will be vain,
For your shadow uplifted hath banished my pain,
And the sunshine of hope is now bright on the floor.

I heed not your counsels. Away, wretch, and bear
From the door shut against you, your venomous sting !
The horror you bring me I seek not to share ;
I see through the guise that you villainous wear,
And give you your deserts, detestable thing !

ALL IS VANITY.

What boots this bitter, burning strife,
This never-ending fight with pain,
We, stubborn, wage through all our life
To find at last our efforts vain?

The earnest chase, in boyish years,
Of phantoms pictured by desire ;
But, when at last success appears
In sight, to have its glow expire ?

And when around our brow success
Reluctant wreathes her laurel crown,
To find we've won, no more, no less,
Than willingness life's cares to drown ?

To find the glittering gold we thought
Would smooth and brighten all our way,
Hath failed to bring the boon we sought,
Or grief assuage, or pain allay ?

To find when looking sadly back
Along the weary path we've passed,
Wrecks thickly strewn along the track
Are all that's left our souls at last ?

To say when ends our seventy years
Of life, this, this, is all we bring,
Great God, to Thee ; sighs, groanings, tears,
A shameless, useless offering ?

THE SHADOW.

Upon my mind's horizon
In the morning light it lay,
On the very verge of fancy
In the distance far away ;
And as it lay there floating
Mid visions new and warm,
I had no thought the tiny thing
Would ever bring me harm.

A speck upon my dreaming,
A cloudlet in the sky,
The briefest note of warning
That something wrong was nigh ;
A germ of pain unfolding
Its leaves of grief and doubt ;
A hateful terror coming near
To blot my comfort out.

A hand-breadth's width of shadow,
That slowly did expand,
Till storm and darkness from it spread
O'er sky, and sea, and land ;
A fear that grew to terror,
A germ of mind-distress,
Expanding till my aching head
Was filled with wretchedness.

A SINNER'S PLEA.

I did wrong, and the good world, soon finding
My error, set up hue and cry ;
In vain flowed my tears hot and blinding,
For mercy in vain did I sigh.

On each brow bitter hatred sat scowling,
Every eye flashed me ruthless contempt,
Every one seemed a Pharisee howling,
“Thank God, from such fault I’m exempt!”

And friends who to me were the dearest,
Were palsied at once by the cry ;
And love which I deemed the sincerest,
Was first from my bosom to fly.

With taunting, and gibing, and sneering,
The bright earth was made like a hell,
Not a shadow of kindness appearing
To bridge o’er the ditch where I fell !

So unlike others’ faults was my error,
So few had such weakness e’er shown,
It seemed meet the anathemas of terror
Should over my poor soul be thrown.

So the good world moved on in its mission,
To the duties engrossing it much,
Keeping guard at the gates of Elysian,
With its garments unstained by my touch.

So the good world still rolls on its mission,
Though the wheel it calls justice may press
The life-blood from hearts whose contrition
Is born of despair and distress,

Lending never a hand in its splendor
To those who repentant might rise,
While charity meek-eyed and tender
From its cold-hearted equity flies.

So, World growing colder and colder,
While pretending lost souls to uplift,
Cold glances, cold word and cold shoulder,
Is it strange that I scoff at your gift?

DOES THE VEIL CONCEAL?

Do spirits of the dead look down
Upon this world's contracted sphere?
Can their sight pierce the darkness thrown
Around the deeds transacted here?

Are schemes of mind and freaks of mood,
Which we conceal with coward pride,
By those we loved most understood,
Despite our weak attempts to hide?

Is every secret impulse known?
Is every secret thought laid bare?
Do these dead friends we call our own
Know just the hypocrites we are?

Do they see through the flimsy sham
Which stamps us here as good or bad?
See you are right, that wrong I am,
Because of chances each has had?

See through the selfish braggart veil
We shrewdly over motives spread,
And read the sad, disgraceful tale,
How on mere husks our fame is fed?

If so, who would not blush to do
An act unworthy, though concealed,
Knowing that to the chosen few
Gone before 'twill be revealed?

WHOSE?

A little mound of earth alone,
With stunted, matted grass o'ergrown,
Lonely haunt in graveyard plot,
By all the busy world forgot,
Yet frequently my footsteps choose
To seek this grave, not knowing whose.

No need of sculptured stone to tell
Who sleeps beneath is sleeping well ;
No need to know the sleeper's name,
I read life's story just the same ;
The old, sad story, I peruse
Beside this grave, not knowing whose.

“Dust to dust,” the end of earth,
The end of dreams that life gives birth ;
The summing up of all our fame
Is here, a mound without a name ;
A matted sod, a lonely spot,
By grieving friends at last forgot.

Not knowing whose, what worth to me
His age, or name, or history ?
Did earth resound once with his crime,
Or mayhap with his deeds sublime ?
What boots, since o'er him hangs the pall
Oblivion weaves and spreads for all ?

One of the millions gone before
Who've left no footprints on the shore ;
This matted sod, these tangled weeds
The only record of his deeds,
For one like me who comes to muse
Beside his grave, not knowing whose.

A KIND WORD.

A little gem from friendship's mine,
This gift above all else I prize ;
And ever since it came from thine,
Within my own heart safe it lies.

There, valued for the motive pure
That prompted it, a gift unsought,
It shall forever live secure,
Protected by endearing thought,

The echo of a heavenly voice
That came when trials sore beset,
And bade my grieving soul rejoice,
Because for me was comfort yet.

O ! welcome word from earnest friend,
That o'er my soul's despairing cry
Did its bright wings of love extend,
And filled with rainbow hues the sky ;

That came, when those I loved forsook
And vied with foes my soul to wring,
With loving tone, that kindly took
From aching heart a poisoned sting.

Ah, little word, so true and kind,
How could my sad heart prize thee less ?
O ! why should not my grateful mind
Give thanks to thee for happiness ?

EQUITY.

Cold-hearted world, that calls accursed
The deed squared not by usual rules,
That holds her very bad who durst
Rebel against the reign of fools.

She erred, and from your throne there came
The virtuous edict, "sinner, die!"
Her sobbing heart, which knew its blame,
For your forgiveness dared not try.

With self-complacent pride you stood
By the strict letter of your law.
So died she, as all sinners should
In whose indictments are no flaw.

And yet, cold-hearted world, you know
Your justice is a cruel curse,
That while you punish hundreds so,
Your ermine shields a million worse!

MADNESS.

Thinking, thinking, ever thinking
Thoughts that rack the seething brain,
From no threatened danger shrinking,
Hugging as a pleasure, pain,
Voiceless, heedless, bends a weeper
O'er a clod-bound senseless sleeper.

Glaring at the gentle moonbeam,
Scoffing at earth's gladdest mood,
Laughing when the lightnings far gleam,
And the tempest fiends intrude,
Eyes so watchful, restless, sunken,
Brain with brimming frenzy drunken.

Sorrow all the thin face bleaching,
Anguish on each feature traced,
Hatred blent with sad beseeching,
Prayer and curses interlaced,
Each a sad and mystic token
That the fragile vase is broken.

Idol, who was once so peerless,
Lying prostrate, overthrown ;
Pleasant home deserted, cheerless,
Garden with rank weeds o'ergrown ;
Heart bereft of human feeling,
Ill beyond all human healing.

Darkness struggling with creation,
 Proserpine in realms of Dis,
Haunt us, yet such desolation
 Hath no gloomier path than this, —
Reason from its throne descending
 Into chaos never ending.

A MEMORY.

“Far around the gray mist of the twilight was stealing,
And the tints of the landscape had faded in blue,
Ere my pale lips could murmur the accents of feeling,
As it bade the fond scenes of my childhood adieu.

—*Halleck.*

The new house is built, while the old one, grown hoary
And shattered by time, has been all torn away ;
Yet still with me lingers the spell of that glory
Which hallowed its halls ere they went to decay.

No new-fashioned structure, no matter how splendid,
Can e'er to my heart the old pleasure restore
It has felt in the old house, whose life is now ended,
In the dear days departed, the dear days of yore.

Though gold deck the new with so much that is charming,
And art at its bidding her treasures unfold,
Still powerless both are my cold heart in warming,
For the dear spell is lacking that clung to the old.

Still lacking the spell, for memory's finger
Points back, in its past, to no hours that were dear,
Recalls not a scene where I once loved to linger,
Not a grief or a joy that has been hallowed here.

In vain do I people this house newly builded
With memories of those who once lived in the old ;
Out of place seem their forms in its halls brightly gilded,
In its parlors sound strangely the stories they told.

Thank God for misfortune, if fortune must ever
Bring desire to exchange the old landmarks for new !
Let gloomy disaster crown every endeavor,
If success means supplanting what formerly grew.

In the glare of success, with heart proudly beating,
And hands grasping prizes alluringly set,
How my soul often aches for the homelier greeting
Which beneath the old roof-tree I long ago met.

And so, as I knew the old house, I rebuild it,
In fancy its small rooms and low I restore,
With a mother's dear presence to lovingly gild it,
And flush me with joy as I enter its door.

How often, forsooth, is memory turning
From the noisy charm of the present away,
How loyal at last is my heart in its yearning
For the quiet delights of that happier day,

When the world seemed a dream, with flowery walks
teeming,

Full of wonderful prizes I hoped to attain ;
Ah ! indeed the old house where I did my boy dreaming
In manhood's remembrance must ever remain.

Let it stand as it is, scarred, withered and blighted,
Though it be but a ruin of happiness sweet,
Still a memory sacred where Thought is delighted
To turn often back from life's struggle her feet.

WEARY.

Weary of this ceaseless striving
For earth's happiness ;
Weary of this vain contriving,
Heartless plot and shrewd conniving,
Seeking, and yet ne'er arriving,
At the goal, success.

Weary of this slavish fawning
At god Mammon's feet ;
Weary waiting for the dawning
Of the promised brighter morning ;
Weary of the jeer and scorning
That our efforts greet.

Weary of this patient waiting
For successful schemes ;
Schemes that have so long been sating
Faith and hope, the heart elating,
Till the brain goes mad creating
Sophistries from dreams.

Weary of this mournful sighing
O'er the vanished past ;
Chanting dirges o'er the dying
Flowers upon our pathway lying ;
Weary of this childish trying
To appease the blast.

Weary of this daily gamble
For the prizes set ;
Weary of the wretched scramble,
Of the piercing thorn and bramble,
That where'er our footsteps ramble
In our paths are met.

Weary of the strife heart-rending,
Merciless and cold ;
Weary of the falsehood blending
With our life, each act attending ;
Weary of ambition ending
In the lust for gold.

Weary of forever facing
Ills for love of fame ;
Weary of this fruitless chasing
Hopes, and with our fingers tracing,
For the idle wind's erasing,
On the sands our name.

Cease, O silly heart ! repining,
Beneath trials bowed ;
Failures, sorrows, plots combining,
Bar no rays of sunlight shining ;
Still remains the silver lining
To o'erhanging cloud.

With life's work, or with life's dreaming,
Sweet rewards are blent ;
Loss its offsets hath redeeming ;
Though our lives are failures seeming,
Duty done, like bright star beaming,
Brings at last content.

PET.

Who she is, or where she is,
Known is to but few ;
Tiniest bit of innocence
Childhood ever knew.
Since no doubt your eyes and hers
Never may have met,
Listen, and I'll tell you why
We have named her Pet.

There may be in other nests
Eyes of birds as bright,
But, I know they cannot shine
With a purer light.
If you could but see them once,
You would ne'er forget,
And could then the reason guess
Why we call her Pet.

Down her neck in waving curls
Hangs her golden hair,
Clustering round an open brow
As the lilies fair,
While her cheek in blooming tinge
Doth the rose eclipse,
And her teeth the purest pearls,
Rubies seem her lips.

She is neither old nor wise
 In the rules of art ;
 Wisdom does not guide her tongue,
 Nor deceit her heart ;
 On the threshold of her life
 Standing without guile,
 Lighting up our darkened souls
 With her sunny smile.

Innocence is in her air,
 Truth is on her tongue ;
 Sweeter lyric on this earth
 Poet never sung ;
 Envy that with poisoned sting
 Older maidens fret,
 Never yet hath cast a shade
 On the brow of Pet.

Who can blame us, we who know
 All her witch'ries well,
 That we feel with hearts aglow,
 Love unspeakable,
 That we often breathe the prayer
 That our God will let
 Never any bleak despair
 Cloud the life of Pet ?

THE UNBROKEN CHAIN.

Her love and her nature were blended
And joined by so perfect a tie,
The chain which they formed seemed intended
Each trial of life to defy.
Its links were so welded together,
Their strength I could certainly trust,
A chain that no change of the weather
Could weaken or ruin with rust.
I know not the hour when she bound me ;
I surely was lovingly fast
As a boy, and in manhood around me
Still lingers this bond of the past.
Still perfect the bond, and forever,
So long as life lingers, the chain
Of true love and earnest endeavor
Shall round me unbroken remain.
As the darkness of night draweth nearer,
And shadows more heavily fall,
Ah ! I see now this truth shining clearer,
She "deserved to be dearest of all."
How low seem my daily desirings,
This scramble for place or for gold,
Compared with the noble aspirings,
She taught me to worship of old !

And though by repeated transgression,
Her precepts seem taught me in vain,
Still my stubborn heart makes this confession,
Thank God for the trace of the chain,
For the tie that can never be broken,
For the memory assuaging my loss,
For the spiritual comfort unspoken
That the grave's shadow reaches across !

DECEMBER DAYS.

The days are dark, and short, and cold,
The earth is robed in snow,
And over hill, and plain, and fold,
The winds of winter blow.

The snow-birds light upon my path,
They seem to fear no harm,
As though the ills that winter hath
Unkindness doth disarm.

The icicles upon the eaves
Have now no drops to drip ;
The frost-king upon all things leaves
The coldness of his grip.

Across the winding brooks and creeks
He breathes his chilling breath,
And on their sparkling waters wreaks
His vengeance, which is death.

Death unto all earth's living things,
Is pictured in his face,
The leaves, the trees, the vine that clings
To their strong arms embrace.

The green grass of the meadow-lands
Is withered by his touch,
And flowers cultured by our hands,
That we have loved so much.

And yet, though desolation is
Attendant on his look,
Though all things shiver at his kiss,
In every clift and nook,

'Tis but a semblance, and his face
And his all-chilling breath
But mirror to our stubborn race
The dark, dark angel, death.

HOME.

With so many memories thronging,
Thronging through my weary brain,
Is it strange that I am longing,
Longing to go back again ? .

Back unto the homestead olden,
To the farm-house old and gray,
In pursuit of phantoms golden,
From which I was lured away ?

Is it strange that I am yearning
For that dearest spot on earth,
I, who have been dearly learning
In strange lands its real worth ?

Is it strange I love to linger
In the haunts my boyhood knew,
Heedless of the warning finger
That would daunt a backward view ?

Is it strange the harness galls me,
That ambition girded on ?
And that e'en success appalls me,
Now that old-time friends are gone ?

Is it strange that the enslaving
Thirst for fame, and power, and gold,
Yields unto the earnest craving
For the humble home of old ?

Is it strange that they come to me,
All of those who loved me so?
And as phantom friends pursue me
Wheresoever I may go?

Is it strange I can not look them,
Tearless, voiceless, in the face,
I, who heedless once forsook them,
Searching for a better place?

Is it strange that I am thinking,
Blinded though I be with tears,
Of that chain of mystic linking
Broken in my early years?

Is it strange, while fortune smiling
Leads me o'er life's onward track,
That the dream is more beguiling
Which in sadness leads me back.

Back along the pathway dreary,
Where my wandering footsteps roam,
Back to feel once more the cheery,
Blaze, and warmth, and love of Home?

GOOD-BYE, OLD YEAR.

The parting hour again draws nigh ;
Once more we say, old Year, good-bye !
Unto the worn-out old, adieu,
And grateful welcome to the new.
We bear the dead to waiting tomb ;
Its struggles fierce, its grief and gloom ;
And hope renewed lifts eager eyes
To catch the glow of brighter skies :
The glow and warmth of radiant beams
That fill with rapture Fancy's dreams.

How tired we were of these months past,
How glad that sunshine comes at last !
How blest the dear illusions seem
With which our hopeful fancies teem
That comes to bless us, comes to crown,
To bring us comfort, wealth, renown,
The largess which with vows sincere,
It seems to promise this new year,
Ambitious threads of purpose weaving,
The warp and woof of great achieving !

But, ah ! how very few of us,
Who gave her welcome coming thus,
Will have the joys we hope to feel
Brought round on Life's revolving wheel.
We all go forth with hearts elate,

To hear the story told by Fate.
Though ev'ry year 'tis told in vain,
We all go forth to hear again
This truth, that all these promised joys,
Before we reach them, Time destroys.

But hastening on the hour draws near
When there shall come the last New Year ;
When hope no more shall thrill the soul
With visions bright of promised goal,
When Life's delights, for which we've schemed,
When Life's success, of which we've dreamed,
No longer lure, when from this heart
These vain delusions all depart,
And we, without regret or sigh
For old or new, say glad good-bye.

THE OMEN,

She bent above the murmuring stream,
The gentle breezes fanned her cheek ;
Her heart was full of blissful dream
That hardly yet she dared to speak.
She seemed to feel his kisses still,
Soft lingering on her rosy lips,
And to herself she murmured, " Will
Life bring to this sweet joy eclipse ? "
She whispered shyly to the stream,
" This secret keep within thy breast ;
I love him with a love supreme ;
My soul is ready for the test ;
And yet I tremble ! Will he be
To me as true as I to him ?
Or will time early set him free,
And leave me wrecked, an idler's whim,
A woman scorned, forsaken, lost,
With but a memory faint and dim
Of what I worshipped ? I am tossed,
O stream, upon the sea of doubt !
I would that some kind fairy might
From your sweet bosom now come out
To guide my wavering soul aright."
She ceased, and o'er her upturned face
Fell shadows of o'erhanging vines,
That might be warning, could she trace

The real omen in such signs.

But then right through the shadows streamed
The brilliant radiance of the sun,

And, as her heart desired, she deemed
This omen truest. Love had won !

She clapped her hands and cried to Fear,
“ Begone ! to me no more come nigh !

At last I see my duty clear,
Sweet stream, to every doubt, good-bye !

AT THE GATE.

The joy-bells in her heart are stilled,
That she may better listen
To catch the tuneful tremors trilled
From aspen leaves that glisten.
She stands within the moonlight clear,
The bright stars o'er her beaming,
When lo ! a footstep drawing near
Awakens her from dreaming.

She's lingered long and lingered late
To greet him at his coming,
And, lonely though it's been to wait,
Her lips have kept on humming
One little song, so old, so new,
That tune which tires never,
A heart-beat whispered music through,
A pledge of love forever.

Still nearer comes the footstep heard,
Her cheeks like flames are burning ;
Her voice no more in tuneful word
Conceals her fond heart's yearning ;
For there before her stands at last,
Her longing eyes discover,
With all life's weary waiting passed,
Within her gates the lover.

AFTER THE STORM.

Through rifts of cloud shine bright the stars ;
The storm-lashed waves are lulled to rest ;
By floating cordage, broken spars,
The fate of once proud ship is guessed.
Upon a gloomy, barren shore,
Rock barrier of the cruel sea,
'Mid crash, and wail, and prayer, once more
Old ocean plays its tragedy.

SUMMING UP.

O greed that is ever desirous
To have what is seldom our due,
Will telling our wants never tire us?
Will never our longing be through?
Disappointed must never our faces
Turn back from the wearisome road?
Shall never hope reach the green places
Where help is for troublesome load?

Time fast on swift pinion is fleeting;
'Tis useless to pine or regret,
Though canker our hearts may be eating,
And eyes are with sorrowing wet,
Still we, with our souls all a-quiver,
Can not from the struggle desist,
But must hope that life will deliver
In time all the pleasure we've missed.

In vain is this wearisome hoping?
Must living be nothing but pain?
Must struggle, and sorrow, and groping,
Be all in this life we attain?
O world with your wonderful learning,
Your daring that soars to the sun,
Is sad disappointment and yearning
The sum of it all when 'tis done?

NATURE.

Yes, I hear her voice of melody amid the wood's aisles
 ringing,
With earnest sweet entreaty calling unto me to come,
And unto witching fancies of what might be mine is clinging,
 ing,
And so 'mid rapturous dreaming is my restless spirit dumb.
Yes, "restless spirit" is the phrase to voice the heart's
 revealing,
That fills my soul with rapture as her winning tones I hear,
Sitting lone within the gloaming, hugging close loves
 tender feeling,
As the echo of her music brings her precious spirit near.
To my sadness how refreshing is her kind appreciation !
How my veins all thrill and tingle to the magic of her tone !
How her, "Do you understand me?" seems of love a new
 creation !
How I grasp its tender meaning and would clasp her as
 my own !
In my passionate devotion, how her blooming form I
 held it,
Within my arms outstretching as to draw her to my breast !
How above the tow'ring mountain crags the shining stars
 beheld it,
And heard the pledge, "I love thee," that made aspiration
 blest !

How my passionate devotion grasped and clasped her in
such fashion,
That my heart seemed beating "Welcome" to the dear
incoming guest !
Every whispered protestation was a pleading cry of passion,
That might bend her from her grandeur to the love that
gave me rest ;
The Tchibai Mountain hoary was first kissed by light in
story,
Ah, here 'mid crags less famous was sweet pressure on my
lips,
And the stars of Heaven, shining far above me in their
glory,
Did enhallow my mad passion and the mountain's kiss
eclipse.
Then and there on Nature's bosom learned I what is Love's
own proving,
As through my veins flowed rapidly a rapture wondrous
sweet.
Then and there my soul discovered that in human hearts
the grooving
Must match with Natures promptings to make happiness
complete.

THE MOUNTAINS' INVITATION.

O Dreamer, I welcome you gladly.
Come, sit 'neath my shadow and look !
Earth's trials that fret you so sadly,
'Tis certainly time you forsook.

Right here, 'mid the grandeur and glory
Of woodland, of valley and stream,
Lies rapture untold of in story,
Lie visions unseen in a dream.

Far off, upon wings ever lifting,
The soul over troubles and bars,
Shall thought, the dear comforter drifting,
Go up to her heaven of stars.

Right her in this cosy nook sitting,
While o'er you these rocky cliffs lean,
Shall shadows and light blent be flitting,
As seldom by dreamers are seen.

Look there, see, far off there, appearing
In haze of the cloudland, those peaks !
What ear is too dull for the hearing
Of words their magnificence speaks ?

And there lie before you sweet valleys,
Gay net-works of culture and bloom,
Where hard-working fool toils and tallies
His scores on his way to the tomb.

He scores them as brilliant successes,
A farm earned, or herds, or some fame.
Ah Dreamer ! How little he guesses
The worthless result of his aim !

Then come, though the prizes I offer
Are but coins cast in Nature's rough mold,
You'll discover, when she fills the coffer,
Her gifts are more precious than gold.

E. J. H.

If wine is improved by the keeping,
Why not love, if 'tis really true?
Should passion go yawning and sleeping
Because it is not fresh and new?

Must age the sweet dream of the lover
With a ruthless awaking destroy,
And the man be so proud to get over
What made him so happy a boy?

Does there grow less ecstatic enjoyment
As we go towards the foot of the hill?
Does this galley-slave business employment
The heart's best desires fulfill?

Shall we yield to the youngster love's glory
Its halo, its passion, its flame,
Of this life all the best of the story,
And we take mere money and fame?

Away with such nonsense, for truly,
Love is, as it should be, like wine,
Though at first just a little unruly,
The older the nearer divine.

We can look, we old codgers, so chilly,
That none but our own wives would dream
That we can be, and are, just as silly
As ever when love is the theme!

Is the dream to the boy of his treasure,
When her hand and her heart have been won,
A greater delight than the measure
To the man of her worth when 'tis done?

Does the hope of the boy, that she'll prove him
A good and true wife, bring more bliss
Than the sunshine the man has above him
Who knows that his wife is just this?

Is the grace of the maid more enchanting,
More enchanting the words of the bride,
Than the wife found in all things not wanting,
Whose virtues are tested and tried?

Then away with the fanciful notion
That to youth should belong all love's zeal,
All the zest of its truest devotion,
Or that age should its passion conceal!

Away with such nonsense, for truly
Love is, as it should be, like wine,
Though at first just a little unruly,
The older the nearer divine.

TO FAME.

A leaf of laurel ! Ah, my friend,
Come you not late to brighten
A weary life ? Can green leaves lend
Much charm to hairs that whiten ?
Can I forget the long, long stress
Of life's unclement weather,
When I and so-called happiness
Were seldom found together ?

A leaf of laurel ! Can it hide
The wrinkles made by toiling ?
Or can it soothe the wounded pride
That fate was always foiling ?
Though now your crown with skillful art
A bald, bare forehead presses,
I fear that still an aching heart
Must roam earth's wildernesses.

Why could you not as well have come
When life was in its morning ?
I'm certain when I think of some
Young heads of your adorning,
'Tis honest anger vexes me,
And mixes with my grieving,
Because I can not help but see
How partial was your weaving.

No matter ! In this bonnet gift
The bee of pride is humming,
And though at first a little miffed,
So slow you were in coming,
I frankly must confess to you,
(The adage still is clever,)
That balances long overdue
Are better late than never.

ANTICIPATION vs. PARTICIPATION.

I once believed possession brought
Life's purest joy and tender,
And that the hues from fancy caught
Were hues of fickle splendor,
Until one day, to my surprise,
I found this wisdom real,
Life's truest, purest pleasure lies
Within the realm ideal.

I had believed this precept taught,
That getting brought the pleasure,
That winning what one long had sought,
Or love, or fame, or treasure,
Was key to bliss, but when the goal
I'd reach through years of scheming,
I found that after all my soul
Had happiest been when dreaming.

The conquest which I thought would bring
So much of joy with glory,
I found it but a paltry thing,
A plain and prosy story,
For from the summit of success,
This ray of truth is shining,
The threads of perfect happiness
Hope holds the art of twining.

The long dull years have taught me true
How many husks we gather,
Have taught that comforts we pursue
Are ghosts of comfort rather.
The will-o-wisps' alluring glow
Across our vision flashes,
We madly follow, grasp, when lo !
Its promise turns to ashes.

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NIGHT LINGERS.

“What a strange sympathy there is between the night and the mind.”

Night lingers ! In the silent gloom
Thought magnifies my woe.
Within this little sleeping-room
Move giants to and fro,
Giants of care that banish sleep
And fill my eyes with tears,
Making my throbbing pulses keek
Accord with ghastly fears.

A streak of gray from the eastern sky
Into my window streams ;
These shapes of terror turn and fly
Before its gladsome beams.
Morn drives Night's phantom ills away
That on my heart had lain,
And in God's precious light of day
My soul is strong again.

A LOVER'S LEISURE.

You ask me how I spend my leisure,
I answer with the greatest pleasure :
I spend it in the old-time fashion,
When Love was a romantic passion,
When Avarice did not guard the portal
That leads the heart to bliss immortal ;
When Love was not an art, or money
The test of Hybla's sacred honey ;
The only proof of it's completeness
In those days was, you know, its sweetness,
Its words, its hopes, its glances tender,
Its dreams, its witching dreams of splendor.
Where e'er I go, o'er mead or mountain,
Through shadowy woods, by lake or fountain,
In lawn, or park, or valley pleasant,
Love's old-time dreams are ever present.
In lawns I wander 'neath the shadow
Of arching elms, an El Dorado.
Through all the realms of fancy ranging,
With one my purest thoughts exchanging.
By fountain? Lo ! the spray that blesses
My lips seems kisses and caresses !
O'er mountain? On I climb till nearer
The stars of Heaven seem and clearer,
Until afar, above earth's creatures,

My eyes behold diviner features
In distant realm of ether floating,
A white-robed angel fond and doting !
In vale? On mossy banks reposing,
I lie in dreams when day is closing ;
On mossy banks, the lips of river,
Where violets bloom and grasses quiver ;
There lie, with no cares to molest me,
To scape the toil of life and rest me ;
There lie and dream in lone recesses
That bending boughs are glossy tresses,
That all the sweet-voiced leaves above me
Are whispering " I love, I love thee !",

THE MASSACRE ON THE DESMOINES.

A MINNESOTA STORY.

In his cabin by the river, on that sultry August day,
Ole happily was dreaming of the old home far away.
Back within his native village, hid among the Northern
 pines,
He was planning emigration and unfolding its designs ;
For rumors that had floated there long time upon the
 breeze,
Of acres free to working men that lay beyond the seas,
Were no longer idle rumors, but facts that all did know,
And the villagers were gathering and packing up to go.
Once more he felt the pleasure, tho' alloyed with bitter
 pain,
Of looking for the last time on childish haunts again,
And from neighbors heard the pledges, should the
 promised letters bring
The proof that all was real, they would follow in the
 spring.
And then, once more, he stood in tears upon the vessel's
 deck,
While in the distance Fatherland was fading to a speck,
And saw the waving signals from the fast-receding shore,
The last good-bye from that old home which he would see
 no more.

And then as darkness closed around his vessel's onward
path,

Such power of restoration man's drooping spirit hath,
His heart exultant bounded to the schemes it had in view,
Exchanging Old World memories for the promise of the
New.

Mapped upon his eager vision, lay the fertile prairies wide ;
Gardens waiting but for dwellers, stretching far on every
side,

With long waving belts of timber fringing many a quiet
stream.

Ah ! no wonder to the Northman seemed a paradise the
dream !

There no fetters clung to labor, all were equal, all were
free,

And the votes of all decided what the law for all should be.
No ban of caste forever barred advancement to the poor,
And Fortune nursed no special class but opened wide her
door.

This was so unlike Europe with its law of caste supreme,
Ah ! no wonder to the Northman seemed a paradise, the
dream !

Then the home he had selected before the dreamer came ;
Cabin, spring and clump of timber, reach of river just
the same,

Stretching Westward, Northward, Southward, like billows
of the sea,

Rolled the prairie ridges beautiful with undulations free.
Over all the sun was shining, 'twas the summer of the year,

And its rays of yellow splendor filled the hazy atmosphere.
In the sunny arch of heaven not a single cloudlet curled ;
Every signal flag of tempest in the tranquil sky was furled ;
All the gentle face of Nature beamed with rapturous
delight ;

Of any haunting terror not a tremor to affright.
On the ripened charms of summer-time hung Beauty's
ling'ring look,

Ere she her haunts of forest, stream and meadow-land
forsook,

Her last look along the valleys, her last look along the
hills,

On the meadow's waving grasses, on the mountain's danc-
ing rills.

All the air was full of stillness, save the warble of a bird
In its cage above the sleeper, not a single sound was heard.
From the open window near him sweet fragrance filled the
room,

Floating inward from the prairie flowers just bursting into
bloom.

In the garden mused Katrina, Katrina, happy wife !
O'er this home of simple beauty which with joy had
crowned her life,

Thinking, ah ! how happy we shall be to greet our kindred
dear,

In this our pleasant prairie home if they shall come next
year.

She'd written home one week before, " Too late to sail
this fall,

But next Spring early, surely come, here's room enough
for all."

And Ole still lay dreaming, while down beside the spring
His children played a Norway play how Olaf became
King.

Two little boys, two little girls, the youngest only four,
And one, the fifth, a babe asleep, beside the play-house
door !

Not a single thought of danger, no shadow of the frown
That Fate suspended o'er him on the sleeper's dream fell
down,

When suddenly Katrina in the garden gave a scream ;
Oh God ! to happy Northman what a waking for his
dream !

Wakened from his dream of pleasure by Katrina's pierc-
ing scream,

He hears the yell of savages and sees the horrid gleam
Of knives above his children's curls, whose large blue eyes
appeal

In vain for mercy to the brutes at whose base feet they
kneel.

From out his dream of pleasure Ole bravely springs to
save,

And grapples in the doorway with a stalwart painted brave
The first of half a dozen crowding in the narrow door,
And hurls the brutal demon like a pygmy to the floor,
And closes with another. Oh ! for an equal strife,
And gallant Ole yet might save those dearer than his life !
In vain he copes with numbers, the fatal blow is sped,
And there he lies within his home, among his idols, dead !

Weeks pass, at last relief has come, to find them lying
there,

The children five beside the spring, so mangled yet so fair,
And in the garden whence in vain she gave that warning
cry,

Katrina, wife and mother, with her pale face to the sky,
And in a heap of ashes, where the house stood charred
and stained

Some blackened bones were all that now of Ole that
remained.

They gathered all and laid them down as one in final rest,
Their grave, the garden of their home, their new home in
the West !

And strangers now the homestead own, no tablet marks the
place,

A mound of earth their monument, that time will soon
erase.

The tragic spot was pointed out to me by settler old,
And as he told the tale to me, so I the tale have told.

A STATESMAN'S FUNERAL.

He was dead, and it seemed that, his life being ended,
Appropriate now was a funeral splendid
On a day set apart for a sorrowing nation,
With music and dirge, laurel-wreath and oration,
To mourn him departed, whom, while he was living,
So many pursued with a hate unforgiving ;
But now he was dead, all were ready to cover
The faults and mistakes of his public life over.
No matter how much in his life they'd abused him,
Pale death from the clutches of Libel had loosed him,
And vultures of hate crack no longer their lashes,
Or croak their ill-natured contempt o'er his ashes.
In death how his virtues are wondrously shining !
On the brow that was cold how the laurel was twining !
How hands, that once struck, were now tenderly raising
And lips that were dumb were now earnestly praising !
At last all admit, as death closes the portal,
And memory 's all that is left of the mortal,
How absurd it all is, this practice that never
Does justice till life hath departed forever !
Do words o'er the clay that has stiffened endear it !
How useless applause when unable to hear it !
When the heart that has ached for affectionate greeting
Has ceased in life's desperate struggle its beating,
Do you think that the soul on the road it is going

Heeds the grief that is false, at the grave you are showing?
Ah, Mourner ! if true, if you've been unforgiving,
If you've had for him no cordial greeting while living,
For his virtues no cheer, for his faults no compassion,
Do not come when he's dead, even tho' it be fashion,
And speak in his praise ! Leave it rather unspoken.
Let the custom you've practiced in life be unbroken.
If your practice was wrong, 'tis too late now to mend it ;
If your friendship was false, 'tis too late to pretend it ;
Do not try to unravel these webs of life's weaving ;
Let the dead rest in peace ; cease false hearted grieving.

FRIENDSHIP.

AN INVITATION

TO "JOSIAH ALLEN'S WIFE."

Dear Samantha, will you never
Pack your trunk and come?
Must I write in vain forever,
Using artifices clever,
And all sorts of shrewd endeavor,
To entice you, to induce you,
From the bonds that bind to loose you?
Is there no amount of teasing,
Artful, subtle, open, pleasing,
That my earnest heart can send you,
Which shall to my purpose bend you?
Are you tied so to Josiah,
You no longer have desire
To acquaintance make with cousins,
Who are numbered here by dozens?
Why not Greeley's maxim follow,
Over hill, and over hollow,
Over lake, and over river,
To that State where God the Giver
Spreads like mystic web of fairy,
Far as eye can reach, the prairie,
Bloom and beauty distant stretching,
Picture sweet of Nature's etching?

Every way to far horizon
Landscapes sweeter ne'er set eyes on !
Waves advancing, waves retreating,
On the shores of vision beating,
So the mind can't help the notion
It is on a dreamer's ocean,
Where the restless wave discloses
Waving grass and blooming roses.

Come ! I can not tell the story.
Come yourself and see the glory !
'Tis a task that needs not daunt you ;
Take the risk some morning, can't you ?
Surely, sober, staid, Samantha
Might a little "quaff Hepenthe,"
Leave the making books for treasure
And start west to hunt for pleasure !
Now, the red-man 's gone, the danger
Is mere nothing for a stranger.
All those old tales, sad and touching,
Of some brutal demons clutching
At a woman's hair, delighted,
Are no longer copyrighted.
They have had their day and season,
They have lied beyond all reason,
And for proof this point to bear on,
Ladies' heads, out West, have hair on !

Come ! Although I may be prosy
In portraying journey rosy,
Fact is fact, this is not banter,

The "wild West" is still enchanter.
Still behind it's rough concealing
Lies a heart crammed full of feeling.
Though our home is but a thatch thing,
On the outside hangs the latch-string.
Come! And welcoming shall greet you,
Honest measure, too, we'll mete you,
Friendly arms shall clasp around you,
You shall think the fates have bound you,
Me and Lizzie, cousins real,
Blood and wedlock, no ideal.
First, then, fast as feet can carry,
Maud, Kate, Lib and also Harry,
If, by dint of strong persuasion,
Furlough 's got for this occasion;
Lastly, Mabel! You who named her
And by proxy sort of claimed her,
Can't expect she will be missing,
And not do her share of kissing.
Lastly? That's misnomer rather;
Other generations gather,
Boy of Lib and girl of Kate
Shouting welcome at the gate,
Girl of Kate and boy of Lib
Hardly out of tuck and bib,
They too gather with the rest,
Clap and crow about our guest
By their actions it is shown
That their Aunt is famous grown,
That her glory clearly shines

All along related lines.
You can see it in their looks
They believe in writing-books.
Bees inside their bonnets buzz,
Bees that tell how Auntie does.
I'm inclined to think that you
Will think these a noisy two.
Their expressions of delight,
Though they may not frame them right,
Still are real, and express
Babies' views of happiness,
Babies' views of what to do
When they 're glad from head to shoe ;
So we'll let each little heart
Have in this reception part.

On our threshold such caressing
Must convince one good at guessing,
That from pole to pole exploring
Woman ne'er had such adoring.
Ransack earth from mount to ocean,
Where is found a like devotion ?
True as truth of Gospel is it,
As you'll find when us you visit.

Then with the first greetings over,
To the brave advent'rous rover
Who has dared thus to unravel
All the tangled skeins of travel,
Who, the railway danger risking,
And the howling "blizzard's" frisking,

Hath come through, with pluck persistent,
Bringing us from old home distant
This dear peg to hang one's thought on,
We have not yet been forgotten.
Bringing this, we'll try to win her
Heart from sadness with a dinner,
For the truth is, every meeting
Of true friends begins with eating.

After dinner, then the strolling
On the lawn to do some trolling
In the pool of memory, trying
To bring up what has been lying
Long forgotten, dreams that thrilled us
Ere Life's colder currents chilled us ;
In the realm of memory ranging,
We will ramble, thoughts exchanging ;
'Neath the birches' shadows walking,
Of the old days bygone talking,
Living o'er our lives till nearer
Seems the vanished past and dearer,
Till our present sorrows lighten,
As the rays of memory brighten,
Till the heaven above us seeming
Bends to bless our mutual dreaming,
Till each heart the ecstatic vision
Fills of far-off world Elysian.

Time says plainly that the gift he
Next shall give me 's labeled fifty !
Would you think it? Half a hundred ?

Can it be old Time has blundered
In the count? Ah! here the proof is,
In my face the warp and woof is;
Proof enough are these hairs hoary;
Wrinkles tell the self-same story;
Health and mind in ceaseless schism,
Soul combating rheumatism;
Fancy sketching pictures pleasing
With my windpipe hoarsely wheezing;
Grooves of thought, which sorrow forces,
Running down my cheeks in courses;
Withered, wilted, warped and stunted,
Aspirations chilled and blunted;
Wearing spec's to improve eye-glances,
How it spoils youth-time romances!
Thus the hateful pack are yelling,
All one dismal story telling!
Struggle as I may to hide it,
'Tis in vain,—these signs decide it!

Ere life growing dim and dimmer
Flickers down to just a glimmer,
Ere fond memory may have parted
With the freight with which she started,
Come! For though you may not know it,
Still statistics clearly show it,
There's a time now fast approaching,
On our heedless steps encroaching,
When too late for sparkling wit, or
Worse for visiting unfit for,
Fate, that has so long bereft us,

Takes the last small comfort left us ;
Shrouds our hearts in melancholy,
Making visits seem a folly.

So I beg you, isn't it reason,
If you're coming, come in season ?
Ere the ills I herein mention
Render worthless your intention.
While your cousin's health-rate such is,
He, as yet, can scoff at crutches,
Still can laugh at Time's slow robbing
Heart of its old-fashioned throbbing,
While ambition onward spurs him,
And life's ardent impulse stirs him,
Ere upon his best endeavor
Fate has turned the key forever,
Come ! And do not let, I pray you,
Any reason long delay you.

TO MY SISTER.

While I ramble to-day in the wildwood,
I dream, as I ramble, a dream
From the far-distant land of our childhood,
Of sunshine and brightness a gleam.

When we, at the feet of our mother,
Sat hearing the stories she told,
Or hand in hand romped with each other,
Not thinking that we could grow old.

When earth was in every way pleasant,
And sunshine our skies did illumine,
When storms were at most evanescent,
And fleeting their darkness and gloom !

How well I remember the meadow,
Oft crossed by our wandering feet,
Where 'neath the old butternut's shadow
We 'd fashioned a truant's retreat !

How down the long lane we went racing
To the wood's pasture fragrant and cool
For berries, or butterflies chasing
Untrammelled by precept or rule !

Or strayed where a log made the crossing
Of creek, when the dull school was out,
Catching chubs on our pin-hooks, while tossing
Our lines, like young Walton's, for trout !

And now, sister, ah ! am I dreaming?
Our girls, well, the youngest is ten,
While our boys' brains are restlessly scheming
With the aspirations of men.

Up the toilsome ascent they have started,
Full of earnest endeavor and hope,
While we, from its summit departed,
Are far down the afternoon slope.

For us no more dreaming and rapture,
Life's race we have won, or have lost ;
No matter, 'tis too late to capture
Success when the summit is crossed.

We burden the air with regretting
At what seems ill-usage by Fate,
Yet turns she deaf ear to our fretting
And whispers for comfort " Too late ! "

Still, as to the depths of the valley
Our steps move reluctant and slow,
Is it childish to loiter and dally
Around a past memory so ?

Is it joy of life's business so real,
That 'tis of true wisdom a sign
To scoff at these star-rays ideal
That from a lost Paradise shine ?

Should age in its wise worldly scheming
The windows of memory bar,
And shut out the radiance beaming
On us in such dreams from afar ?

Ah ! who is the ready-tongued scoffer,
Dear sister, because we, forsooth !
Think time has no solace to offer
To age like these glimpses of youth ?

Who casts the first stone at our folly,
Because we delightedly cling
In moments of deep melancholy,
To fading remembrance of Spring ?

That memory of brightness and gladness,
Which comes like an angel to cheer,
Dispelling the darkness and sadness
Oft clouding our pilgrimage here.

So while I to-day in the wildwood
Idly ramble, dear sister, I dream
About the dear days of our childhood,
And catch of their brightness a gleam !

A BOOK MARK.

I'd troubled been to keep the place
Where I'd left off in reading,
So that I might resume and trace
The plot wherever leading,
When one day spoke a little Miss,
Who'd watched the whole proceeding :
“ Perhaps, sir, something now like this
Might help if you are needing.”

The tress thus given Time did hide
Between that old book's covers,
Which long ago was thrown aside
As silly tale for lovers,
Till accident one evening led
My hand to where I'd slipped it,
And set me thinking of the head
From which the scissors clipped it.

I tried to read, the words ran wild
In spite of pebbled glasses,
Before me stood an artless child
That poet's dream surpasses ;
Her face brimful of happiness,
Her eyes with rapture glowing,
And in her little hand the tress
She was on me bestowing !

I stop and lay the book aside,
My fingers gently smoothing
The golden tress. I could not hide
The tears that were so soothing,
For in this little lock of hair,
Across the years so dreary,
My childish friend, so sweet and fair,
Had come with prattle cheery.

No one needs wonder that my hand
Did touch this lock caressing,
As if it well might understand
What heart was half confessing,
That I, grown gray with care and pain,
My wreath of Fortune's making,
Had in this book-mark found again
Relief from sad heart's aching.

So as I smoothed the golden tress,
On wings my soul was flitting ;
Her innocence and loveliness,
This book-mark was transmitting.
Long years ago, untouched by sin,
We mourned her, foolish mortals !
Whose curly head was welcome in
The blessed Heavenly portals !

AN AUTOGRAPH.

Yours truly,
J. Burchard.

Upon his grave for twenty years
The grass has grown uncut, untended,
Unwatered by my fallen tears,
Or pressed by footsteps thither bended.
Without a pilgrimage or sigh,
I've kept away, as if declaring
That for his sterling friendship, I
Had never had much real caring.

By merest chance I oped to-day
A faded, worn, old-fashioned letter,
Among things useless filed away,
To make me room for something better,
When lo ! there stood before my eyes
His words, his thoughts, each sentence blazing
With flame of reason deep and wise,
Yet blent with tenderness amazing.

O foolish ear ! that long had sought
For tongue more witching to address me !
O foolish head ! which harbored thought
That sometime truer love would bless me !

O soul ! that dreamed of purer bliss,
Of sunshine brighter, warmer, clearer !
A faded letter proves me this,
Life hath not found me friend sincerer.

“Yours truly !” Yes, it all comes back,
The dear old time when I was starting,
With heart elate, upon the track
That leads so far ! I hear at parting
His earnest, cordial, frank “Good-bye,”
His warning words not false or hollow,
And with life lived, I now know why
His was the best advice to follow.

“Yours truly !” Yes, on wing of thought
My heart goes back to make confession,
To thank him for the precepts taught,
To thank him for Love’s best expression ;
The laurel he deserved to wear,
Oh ! would my hand might fitly wreath it !
The praise, his due for virtues rare
Oh ! would my little verse might breathe it !

Is it in sooth a weak regret,
Is it false weakness heart exposes,
When I confess my eyes are wet,
As hand once more the letter closes,
As I once more put all away ?
Can it be strange my soul confesses
That memory sweet recalled to-day
My harassed spirit soothes and blesses ?

THE BUMBLE-BEE'S NEST.

(AN EPISTLE TO FRED W. RUSSELL.)

Pray tell me, Fred, hath memory set
On the pleasant hours of boyhood yet?
Are these wrinkled brows and grizzled hair,
This ceaseless round of corroding care,

The outward signs that the mind its door
Will ope to those pleasant hours no more?
Those pleasant hours when we were boys
And made our share of childish noise?

Just why, who knows? but to-day there streamed
Through memory's casement rays that seemed
Reflected back from that distant shore,
And you and I were boys once more.

The school was dismissed, and just we two
In the meadow, which Deer Creek ran through,
Were roaming around in eager quest
To find somewhere a bumble-bee's nest.

There were heaps of stones in the meadows then,
And with our feet we would stamp them, when,
If a nest was there, to the listening ear
The "buzz" would come that proved "'tis here!"

The tactics were, when a nest was found,
To discreetly stand as pickets round,
Outside the circle of angry bees,
To let them "settle" before we seize.

When the angry scouts to the nest return,
Our brave hearts then for the conflict burn,
And we arm ourselves with wisps of hay
And bravely march to the coming fray.

First, careful sappers, we one by one
From the heaped up pile remove each stone,
Till the sought-for nest is brought to light,
Ready to sack, nor a bee in sight.

The approaches made and the nest all bare,
And courage set by the gage "To dare,"
Armed with our wisps we both close in,
And with shout and cheer the fight begin.

We thresh the nest with our wisps of hay,
We vow not a bee shall rise to-day ;
As they struggle out from their little town,
Our blows fast falling beat them down.

A moment's pause our success to see,
To glut our eyes upon victory ;
That moment's enough to dash our cup
Of brief success, for the bees are up !

One, two, how many? Ah, who can tell?
They roar in our ears like an ocean swell !
Their sortie is earnest, without pretense,
And we get some practice in self-defense.

The air seems full of their whirring wings!
Our fancy is fuller of possible stings!
'Twixt danger and fun, excitement and fears,
The "wisps" are needed to guard our ears.

And you? pursued by a squad more close,
A sort of bumble-bee overdose,
Switch "wisp" in vain, the bee is in luck,
Your cry admits one stinger has "stuck."

While I (the motto is true always,
The runner may fight another day!)
Take to my heels, but am saved, alas!
By diving my head in thistly grass.

'Tis ours at last, the nest is won!
We rob it there in the summer sun,
Spread out the honey in boyish pride,
Like mightier chiefs our prey divide.

'Tis silly, perhaps you think, for me,
A staid old foggy of sixty-three,
To thus recall with such real zest
The breaking of bumble-bee's nest.

But the fact is, Fred, as you must know,
We must confess as older we grow,
That the purest fun, the sweetest joys
Of life were had when we were boys.

TO A FRIEND.

WITH A COPY OF "THE HEGGENSVILLE PAPERS," CHRISTMAS,
1888.

With days growing shorter, is Life growing wearier?
Are skies covered more or less thickly with cloud?
Do roads that we travel grow smoother or drearier?
Doth Night with less gloomier shadows enshroud?
Doth Soul less relief find from turbulent aching,
As nearer we come to the Stygian shore?
Is it truth, or a lie, we rejoice Time is taking
This "fever called Living" to torture no more?

Is it vain the regret, this passionate yearning
To have captured the flags of contentment while here?
From defeat and despair cold philosophy turning
Should make o'er such farewells rejoicing sincere.
And yet, my dear Coz, is it silly the notion
To cling to remembrances early and far,
To the memories sweet of a friendly devotion
That over Life's pathway hath shone like a star?

ENCLOSING A PICTURE.

Old friend, I beg you do not let
My features scare you ; they are set
In wrinkles, as you will discover,
And are not first-class for a lover ;
But that I've put the best face on it,
You really may depend upon it.
The artist did not spare expense
To make it what I wanted, hence
He can't its homeliness be blamed for,
Nor strictly speaking, I ashamed for.
Time in his so-called line of duty
Is raising hob with all my beauty.
That I'll be shorn before I know it,
These pictured features surely show it !
Old friend, perhaps I should remind you,
Lest your too friendly eyes may blind you,
That I've grown older since we parted,
And lost some things with which I started,
Some things perhaps I thought too much of,
My hair, my teeth, and just a touch of
That egotism youngsters start with,
And which it seems so hard to part with !
Just think how long I've been sojourning
On these wild western prairies, turning
My wits always to be a winner,

And then don't wonder I've grown thinner.
Just think up here how blizzards flay ye,
And wonder not, my friend, I pray ye.
My head hath grown, above the blow line,
Bare as Mont Blanc above the snow line !
Old friend, I've no excuse to offer ;
What's left of me I kindly proffer,
Memento that I don't forget you,
Though many years 'tis since I met you.
May be you'll kindly try to trace
The outlines of the boyish face,
Which once you knew, among the wrinkles ;
Perhaps you'll see youth's plumper crinkles.
I know you'll try with might and main
To bring your boy-friend back again,
To see crop out, amid the ravage
Which Time has made with temper savage,
Some sign that shall the dreams recall,
When you and I believed them all,
When you and I were planning, scheming,
And doing lots of pleasant dreaming,
When life was new and seemed so long,
With all its language set to song.
So, friend, I send it ; if it bring
A memory round which may cling
Some tendril of the realm of thought
From out the Past, long buried, brought,
I'll care not for the shock to thee,
When you these battered features see,
And learn that they belong to me.

REPROSPECT.

The years are speeding ; very soon
The friendly links that bind us
Will broken be. The pleasant June
Of life-time lies behind us,
And yet the weary paths we tread
Are not all dark repining,
So long as brightly overhead
Sweet memory keeps on shining.

We see more plain as years go by
What idle hopes we follow,
That joys for which we toil and sigh
Are worthless, false and hollow ;
And so, as out of gathering night
Fall shadows darker, longer,
No wonder to this backward flight
Doth yearning mind cleave stronger.

To catch once more those brilliant rays
Before they fade forever,
That shone upon our golden days,
When romance and endeavor
Went hand in hand, ambitious zeal
A zest to labor giving,
When full of hope the heart did feel
That life was worth the living.

FRIENDS AND FRIENDS.

“ Friends there are, and there are friends,”

And between is distance wide,
And our patient searching ends
Oft in effort missapplied.
Of the number crowned as royal,
Ah ! how many prove disloyal !

One, I need not speak the name,
Enters hourly my heart's door,
Comes without pretentious claim,
Balm upon my wounds to pour,
And without ado is bearing
Comfort for my secret sharing.

Smiles are in this true friend's eyes,
Truth is in this true friend's words,
In each thought that 's uttered lies
Hope that my best purpose girds,
Points me, leads me, guides me ever,
On and up to high endeavor.

Smiling, talking, criticizing,
Prompting the best things I do,
Is it now the least surprising
That I love a friend so true ?
Is it strange that this receiving
Of such gifts brings true believing ?

If you doubt what I am saying,
You have never had such friend,
So, your disbelief allaying,
I must what I've told defend ;
Witnesses I'll summon showing
Some things of my friend's bestowing.

Stand forth, Kindness ! Who when need
Hung above my head its cloud,
Came with ministering deed,
Lifting up my spirit bowed ;
Came, and made those gloomy hours
Fragrant with the bloom of flowers !

Stand forth, Hope ! Who, when despair,
Every nerve of heart was wringing,
Came and whispered, " all this care
But foreshadows joy upspringing,
Certainly shall dawn a morrow
That shall not be black with sorrow " !

Stand forth, Faith ! Who did not sneer
Calling all my strivings vain !
Who did not with brow severe
Brand my efforts with disdain,
But instead with skilful art
Failure kept from fainting heart !

Ah ! I need not summon more !
Witnesses for this dear friend
Questioned tell the story o'er,
How the words with actions blend ;
Thus, so many gifts receiving,
Strange if I were unbelieving.

A RHYMED POSTSCRIPT.

I have so much to write, it must wait for to-morrow,
Though this blank page that's left here my soul fills with
sorrow,

As I think of the room there is in it gone fallow,
Where Genius might sow so much seed, deep or shallow,
And hope, as it ever does hope, that the sprouting
Of what it has sown will prove genius undoubting;
That spark of the flame which, in palace or hovel,
Though high we may soar or though low we may grovel,
Will kindle and blaze more or less in the bosom,
Till we write down our thoughts just for fear we may lose
'em.

Ah! friend of my heart! let me tell you, no clearer
Sunshine can be found, or a happiness dearer,
Than to sit pen in hand and a clean sheet before you,
With memory shedding her sunny rays o'er you,
And scribble and scribble, your sentences breathing
The fragrant aroma of wreath you are wreathing
To bind a friend's brow with. O laurel ideal,
How often I've wished that thy roses were real!

TO A SISTER'S PORTRAIT.

I sit alone and fondly retrace
The faithful type of thy girlish face ;
Thy sparkling eyes are upon me bent,
As of old brimful of merriment ;
Ah ! how from the truthful canvass speak
The smiling lips and the dimpled cheek,
The waving curls of thy golden hair
Tossed careless back from thy forehead fair ;
These are all portrayed so true and clear,
Is it strange I dream thou'rt with me here ?

A bustling crowd in the street below
My window are passing to and fro ;
But I seek not, with my eye nor ear,
To catch one look or a sound to hear ;
Far back to the past hath memory flown
To the pleasant hours once all our own ;
And many a joy of that sweet time,
When our budding hopes were in their prime,
On the fleeting wing of memory brought,
Are mine again in this lapse of thought.

Though never again may the bliss be mine
To gaze on the real face of thine,
Should our paths diverge to never meet,
This thought to my brooding mind is sweet,

That with laughing eye and rosy cheek,
And lips that the old-time language speak,
Words to lighten, encourage and cheer
Whenever the shadow of grief draws near,
In dreams by night, and in thoughts by day,
Thy gentle spirit will with me stay.

AN EXCUSE FROM THE PRAIRIE.

(An answer to an invitation to attend a Wooden Wedding.)

From out on the prairie, how *can* you expect
Me to send to this wedding a present of wood?
Not a tree, through my spectacles, can I detect
For practical axe to work up as it should.

Not a tree, but, as far as the vision goes, grass!
A wonderful place for a poet to thrive!
But in wooden inventions for presents, alas!
No spot for mechanic to plan and contrive.

Just think of it, now, and imagine how vexed
I am, because I can't do as I would,
Go straight to a saw-mill, and there unperplexed
Find all sorts of lumber to match with my mood.

Ah! Martha, it grieves me to tell you the truth,
It shames me to lay our grim skeleton bare,
That from warm Winnebago to polar Duluth
We have not a stick of wood really to spare!

My heart-strings are strained by this truth on my lip,
And yet you should know why your cousins here fail
To respond to the call; not so much as a chip
Was I able to find in this letter to mail.

No wood is here known of the kind grown in trees ;
Our bread rolling-pins that are twisted from straw
Are fair imitations, but one never sees
The *genuine* wooden ware fresh from the saw.

So, Martha, forgive that I bring you no ware ;
Had my heart had its way I'd have brought you a bowl,
Or wash-tub, or skimmer, or cradle, or chair,
But will can not natural causes control.

And so empty-handed by letter I come,
My gift a collection of wishes sincere,
That on your life's tree shall hang gold-tinted plum,
And skies matrimonial ever be clear.

FRIENDSHIP'S TEST.

You prate of pure friendship ; pray give me a sample
Of what you call friendship so sterling and true.
I am tired of words, so give an example
In deeds of the love-bond between me and you.

I doubt you? ah ! blame not this honest confession.
O why should you ask me mere words to believe?
When so many prove false in despite of expression,
Pray tell me, how know I but yours will deceive?

Do you blame me for putting your heart upon trial,
While your lips speak so glibly, “ I’m truly thy friend ”?
'Tis my head, not my heart, to your love gives denial ;
'Tis reason that sneers at the pledges you send.

Did you ever reflect on the chances and changes
That time hath for us most undoubted in store?
Do you fear not for us the cold bitter estranges
So many have felt when first passion is o’er?

So long as now smoothly flows life’s mystic river,
Our barks may together float, held by Love’s chain ;
But I fear the first blast of the tempest will shiver
Its links, and we part thus to ne’er meet again.

Ah ! the test, after all, of thy uttered devotion
Is not sunny words in the pleasant daylight,
But deeds, when life’s sorrows are all in commotion,
And over my head sweep the shadows of night.

Though my heart yearns for love, 'twould rather be lonely,
And remain unbefriended for ever, as now,
Than to find, when misfortune has encompassed me, only
The memory left of thy fair-weather vow.

Dare you promise me this : when sorrows may thicken,
Will you still have the courage to stand by your friend ?
In the hour of his gloom, of health and wealth stricken,
Will thy loyalty last and endure to the end ?

Why smile, as you do, at my staunch disbelieving
In much of the friendship that's offered us here ?
Strip off the disguises black falsehood is weaving,
And blush for thy species, O friend insincere !

So long as success spreads its golden fleece o'er me,
So long I am sure, and no longer in sooth,
That this masquerade of affection before me
Is real, and not a mere semblance of truth.

Unless thou can'st act what thou say'st to perfection,
And show by thy deeds what thy heart thus intends,
Do not blame me for thinking there is no election
For me, and that you and I ne'er can be friends.

Can I ask this of thee ? O ! can thy heart offer
Affection like this up at true friendship's shrine ?
If so, thou hast won, and can'st lead back the scoffer
From the dark hell of doubt into sunlight divine.

ESTRANGED.

We frequent the old haunts no more,
As often once together,
And mutual joys, so dear of yore,
Have broke restraining tether.
The hours that once were glad and fleet
Are now no longer cheery,
And every forest walk and seat
To me seems cold and dreary.

The autumn moon that once so bright
Shone o'er each hill and hollow,
Where we, in chase of heart delight,
True friendship's lead did follow,
Still shines, but ah ! so pale and cold
Is every beam it glances,
It seems no more the moon of old
That thrilled my youthful fancies.

In other climes where you now roam,
With stranger faces round you,
Perhaps remembrance does not come
With vague regrets to wound you ;
But unto me, who here remain,
By thought companioned only,
Remembrance o'er and o'er again
Reminds to make me lonely.

To you the active present brings
A solace for all sorrow ;
To me the sluggish past still clings
And clouds each coming morrow.
You bask in sunshine of to-day,
Or climb its clouds victorious ;
I idly seek to catch a ray
Which yesterday seemed glorious.

You drink from Life's joy-giving springs ;
This world to you is real ;
While my heart spite of reason clings
To pleasures all ideal.
You've learned the trick of winning fame,
And fortune crowns your scheming ;
While I nor gold or glory claim
As a reward for dreaming.

Upon the solid ground you stand,
And deal in fact, not fiction ;
The poet-phrases I deem grand
To you seem wordy diction.
And while to some exalted thought
My brooding mind is clinging,
You act, and lo ! the deed is wrought,
About which I've been singing.

Success upon you smiles serene
And wreaths your brow with glory ;
No bleak disasters intervene
To dim your future story.

You win what here men covet most,
Position, honor, splendor ;
I live to little purpose, lost
In musings vague or tender.

And thus we two, who were such friends
When on life's voyage we started,
Have grown as strangers ; hopes, aims, ends,
Of both our lives have parted.
I from my dreamland-palace sneer
At your cold, worldly scheming,
While you fling back, with taunt and jeer,
Contempt on all my dreaming.

But when 'tis o'er, and both have passed
The mystic future's portals,
And to us is revealed at last
The idle aims of mortals ;
May not the joy revive again
That bound us with its tether,
And souls that seem so coldly twain
Have haunts once more together ?

Or are the hope and longing vain
That haunt me in my dreaming ?
And shall I never see again
Thy face with friendship beaming ?
But sailing o'er the unknown sea,
Shall we thus drift and sever,—
I naught to you or you to me,
But strangers cold forever ?

A FUNERAL WREATH.

She is dead, though it seems but a day
Since as children together we played ;
And weak seems the tribute I pay,
To stand by this grave newly made
And speak of her worth. She is dead !
Best friend of my happiest years ;
And my grief finds expression unsaid
In tears.

I think of the time when to each
Success seemed a fortunate thing ;
A delight that either could reach
And home like a conqueror bring.
I think of it all, the long race,
The struggle, the trials, the fears,
As I stand looking on her dead face
In tears.

I think of the brave words of cheer
I've heard from her ambitious lips,
That told me, "doubt not, persevere,
Our stars will emerge from eclipse."
I think how her life did reveal
The love which so greatly endears,
As here, at her grave now, I kneel
In tears.

I think of it all, the kind tone,
The earnest, the welcoming greet,
The frankness, the tenderness shown
When we for the last time did meet.
I think of it all, how she spoke
Of other such meetings; the years
Have brought death, and I bow to the stroke
In tears.

She is dead, though it seems but a day
Since as children together we played,
And I, in life struggle grown gray,
Can not let her memory fade.
I build her a monument high
In thought; love the marble uprears,
And affection engraves there "Good-bye"
In tears.

TEMPERANCE RHYMES.

PATRICK'S PERPLEXITY,

I'm sorely perplexed how the deuce it is done,
How men kin ride two hosses azy as one !
An' yit 'tis a fact ; there is one in our town
Who plays this hoss act and he duz it up brown.
He's wonderful pious, an' yit on the back
Of License he rides all the week round the track ;
But Sundays he solemnly mounts on the horse
Called "Sabbath Day Closing," an' jogs round the
course

All solemn and sober, as if he did say,
"Look out, see a saint ride a horse the right way !"

It's a mystery to me how sich riders desave
The crowd who in moighty foine ridin' belave.
It perplexes me much how one can pretend,
Ridin' six days wild License, to be sich a friend
To the soberly trot of a Sabbath Day Nag.
How kin he of one day of ridin' him brag,
An' thin, prompt at midnight, back into the stall
Put him up, bit, bridle, check, saddle and all,
An' mountin' on License, an' givin' him rein,
Cry "Look, see how nate I this divil restrain !"

Dare a sinner like me sich a character smirch ?
He awes me becoz he belongs to the church.
Whin piety licenses whisky shops, thin
The sellin' the stuff has been stripped of its sin.
Whin the frown of the saints over wrong is relaxed,
Becoz of the thriflin' amount it is taxed,
Then tiplin' made azy takes purity's gloss,
An' gets a false standin' beside of the cross.
But for this sort of saints, howe'er gifted they pray,
It is best to "look out" whin they travels your way.

DON'T YOU ?

If a patient should partake
Of a poison berry,
Were a Doctor called, he'd make
A weak statement, very,
If he claimed that taking in
That which made one spew,
Was the best way to begin
Finding health. Don't you ?

If one in a harlot's arms
Lies in shame's embrace,
Could he honest boast of charms
Virtue has of face ?
If he, growing bold, applaud
What he calls the true,
I believe he is a fraud,
Say now, friend, don't you ?

If one brags about his zeal
In the cause of right,
How he for the common weal
Doth determined fight,
Yet will for a price let Rum
Its pursuits pursue,
I believe the time has come
To cry Fudge ! Don't you ?

When you hear a preacher preach
 'Gainst the whiskey curse,
When you hear a teacher teach
 Nothing can be worse
Than the crimes that laws defy,
 And yet men are who
Go and vote for license, I
 Call them shams! Don't you?

THE POINT.

(Shown by a party man.)

Now look at this, my honest friend,
And see the point I show you :
Our party practices all tend
To virtuous aims. I know you
Have much at heart the common weal,
Although a " crank " your name is,
Still I am sure you ought to feel
That not with us the blame is
For all this vice, and filth, and crime,
Which makes one lose heart nearly,
So give me, friend, one moment's time,
And I'll explain it clearly.
You see, wise statesman are compelled
To manage crimes discreetly,
And thus the monster vice is held
In leash of fetters neatly.
If you would hold Vice in restraint,
Don't whack it hard, but rather
Be towards it a forgiving saint,
A sort of indulgent father.
Our doctrine is, avoid extremes,
An average course pursuing ;
If you can't carry perfect schemes,

What use in senseless stewing ?
Get what you can, and be content ;
The world wasn't made in *one* day ;
And preaching of the best intent
That seems just right on Sunday,
On week-days loses all its force,
When butted square 'gainst evil.
So, statesman find, the wiser course
To circumvent the devil
Is not prohibiting his whims
By fierce fanatic whackings,
But trimming off his outer limbs
By tempered hatchet hackings.
And thus, my friend, now don't you see,
Such party work as this is,
Hath back of it philosophy
And wisdom of Ulysses ?
The whiskey sirens can't seduce
A pilot who is steering
With tympanum all out of use,
And ears bereft of hearing !

UNPARTISAN WORK.

(As explained by Mike Goff in a letter to the Hon. Jedediah Bunkem.)

My dear Mister Bunkem I think it is right
Not to let party lines be drawn overtight
Or these public matters will fuddle us quite.
The quistion's in doubt what's the besht way to go,
An therefore men make up their minds very slow.
If we can not by arguments proper persuade,
Thin I'm not the mon to abuse an upbraid.
I will no voter push if he can not plain see,
On the tariff at least, that we ought to agree ;
The way to discuss it is havin the ear
Ov the voter thin make it jist perfectly clear.
Don't fog him with figgers, *ad-valorems* an such,
But, jist like a sinsible arguer, touch
The pints that are vital ; thin give him a drink,
An lave him to reason, jist lave him to think
It all over, both on the inside an out,
An there he is, sound on the tariff, no doubt !
So to help the cause on an be patriot like,
I am going to make this unpartisan strike
For the party's success ; an I hope you will find
In me a supporter that plases your mind :
I despise to wire-work or on opponent loose
That blackguard of politics, dhirty abuse.

I belave that our side shud with candor upset
All!sophistry difficult wherever met.
I belave that the truest, besht way to beguile
An intilligent voter is give him a "smile."
Now the help I can furnish I'll brafely recite :
I run the saloon called the Bower of Light.
It sthands on the north side of Liberty Square,
An a mighty good stand it is too, I declare !
Hard by on the South is the Sailor's Retreat,
Where the tars when they land go for something to eat,
But first, ere they put a warm pratee to lip,
They sthop at the Bower for a comforting nip ;
So plainly you see what a chance I have got
To set up the pins for you right on the spot ;
Have tickets all reddy, and whin they come in,
An call out for whiskey, or brandy, or gin,
Jist stand there an say, " By's, 'tis all free to you,
If only ye'll jist help a gintleman through ;
A rale nice gintleman, one of me friends,
His compliments, By's, to the laborer sends ! "
Don't you see, Mr. Bunkem, how asy 'twill be
To get ivery voter, who drinks there, to see
Where his interest lies? No eloquent speech
Sent under a frank has such wonderful reach,
As a little brafe practical practice like this,
That with men of the people comes niver amiss.
Too many great men think that spaches convince ;
I've hild to a different view iver since
That canvass when Blodget was beaten by Bluff.
'Twas sinse agin folly, tinderloin agin tough,

Mister Blodget made spaches, while ould Bluff and I
Kept trating the voters with rale ould rye
Mixed discrately with wather, and when it was done,
Bluff had all of the votes in the boxes but one.
Blodget voted, of coorse, for himself, as he should !
Had we trated him too, I've me doubts if he would.
This practice good sinse with good feeling combines,
The voters ain't split up on Know-Nothing lines.
Beside of the Irish stands friendly the Dutch ;
The elbows of Yankees with Norwagens touch ;
The English, Italians, the Frenchmen an' Swiss,
With the Nayger, too, swallow a platform like this.
An *that* day a haythen, a chap with a cue,
Took a drink, and for Bluff cast his virgin vote, too.
Ivery man of them all did swately unite,
So convinced were their doubts, in the Bower of Light.
So you see, Mister Bunkem, iv'ry voter I'll get,
Except the fanatics, that pestilent set,
Who always are strivin to sittle the doubt,
Whether sin is the besht *in* the Nation or *out* !
These cranks are so cranky they take for a text,
" Good morals cums first, an the tariff cums next ! "
Such partisan stuff, Mister Bunkem, as *that*
Would knock every statesmanlike principle flat,
But, as a non-partisan, nevertheless,
I shall sthick to the work an belave in success.

BIGSBY'S EXPERIMENT.

At Bigsby they tried it, to see if 'twould do,
The making one devil do duty for two ;
The making one devil give bonds that his deeds
Should be just exactly what temperance needs ;
The making one devil a sort of a friend
On which the best wisdom could safely depend.
Having but one, 'twould be easy to watch,
And see if his virtues were real or botch.
By the bonds which he gave and license he paid,
'Twas hoped that the blind pigs would be made afraid
And keep in their holes ; for one devil would be
The czar of a moral Monopoly !
So they piled on the tax till low dives obscure
Went out of the business and shut up shop sure,
But one who had money was left to do biz,
The proper restraint being put upon his.
So tight was he guarded, so hampered and tied,
That only one door could be opened right wide
To let suckers in. All Bigsby was glad
To know what a capital practice it had
To handle bad demons, all bottled but one,
And he under bonds that good deeds should be done !
It seemed there in Bigsby that heaven was found,
Where only one hell resort cumbered the ground,

And fathers and mothers rejoiced that the low
Resorts to tempt boys had met wise overthrow.
For in Bigsby, as elsewhere, all hated the dive,
That place where the lowest of infamies thrive,
And so they were happy when Bigsby law shut
All dirty low places and in their stead put
One palace, "The Boreham," where nothing was done
Outside of Propriety's practice not one !

The effort seemed worthy, and Bigsby was hot
O'er new-fangled notion that surely 'twas not
The stuff that one drank, but the place where he drank it
That showed with disgrace or with honor we rank it.
So Bigsbian mothers they waited and watched
To see if the viper they feared could be scotched
In a palace of light, in one so restrained,
So hampered, so taxed high, so guarded and chained,
That all it could do was to do it up brown,
All the work in its line in that nice little town !
That's all, but to do it additions were built,
Enlarging this palace of marble and gilt.
(And spell the last word with a "u" if thou wilt).

'Twas a beautiful place with tiles for a floor,
Nice pictures on walls, and mahogany door
Where crowds without jostling could come and go,
At all times and hours, save Sundays, you know.
Without and doubt over Bigsby was blown
A breath that seemed truth ; "The Boreham" had tone ;
In which it can't be that His Majesty sits
'Mong the popping of corks and flashing of wits

To allure bright boys, to allure and betray,
And lead them to sulphurous regions some day.
Oh, no ! not a Bigsbian mother but felt
That blows of that sort were by savage cranks dealt.
So they waited and watched for a year to go by,
That the wonderful arch might be seen in the sky
As rainbow of promise, which surely foretold
That Rum's hateful ravage at last was controlled
By this simple device : give only the job
To those who pay high for the license to rob !

But the mothers that year, before it was through,
Discovered this truth that in Bigsby was new,
That even " The Boreham," with all of its style
Kept demons to ruin with practices vile.
O'er sad brows of many clouds gathered of grief,
And hearts that were broken found little relief
In knowing a so-called *respectable* place
Had brought to their homes and their loved ones disgrace.
The wives of the drunkards found little to cheer
In the fact that wines of " The Boreham " were dear ;
For boys that were ruined, these mothers so fond
Found nothing for comfort in strength of the bond
" The Boreham " had given ; *that* could not restore
The souls that were lost since they entered its door !
So sentiment changed, and from Bigsby at last
This silly delusion, this sophistry passed.
This famous device of political hacks
A humbag was proved by the Bigsbian facts :
Though license be high, though some dives it suppress,
So long as the quantity sold is no less,

One mixer of drams to whom all acquiesce
Can for a whole town furnish plenty distress.
“The Boreham” was run by supply and demand.
With all of its gilding it was not so grand
That tony bartenders turned any away
Who did for the whiskey they guzzled there pay.
Stripped clear of its gilding and shorn of its brass,
This “Boreham,” this place of such exalted class,
Was merely a dive, whose proprietors hid
’Neath whitewash and varnish the deeds which they did.
If wreckers of ships are angels of light ;
If devotion to wrong is worship of right ;
If fire that consumes is the maker of wealth ;
If breath of contagion is bringer of health ;
If the harlot’s red paint is innocent tinge ;
If doorway of shame hath respectable hinge ;
If a lie on the lips is an emblem of truth ;
If he who corrupts is a savior of youth,
Then *this* shrewd assassin, crouched ready to spring
On weakness, may be a respectable thing !
This Bigsby found out when high license she tried,
And this is the reason she flung it aside.

SATIRE AND HUMOR.

SCATTERING SHOT.

A LECTURE.

My friends, I greet you with a threadbare theme,
Our age of progress, enterprise and steam,
When men no longer innocently plod
Upon mud highways by forefathers trod,
But by express their little journeys go,
And think that lightning is becoming slow ;
When men no longer bow unto the sway
Of idols, be they made of wood or clay,
But, in the place of emperors and kings,
Set up for worship quite as useless things,
Tyrannic despots that are known as “ Rings ” ;
When Custom is considered an old bore,
All out of fashion with its styles of yore ;
When all things new are patented as nice,
And Virtue’s label advertises Vice ;
When men declare, by resolutions strong,
They are the sworn antagonists of wrong,
And that their daily acts and deeds are leaven
Which will ere long make this old earth a heaven ;
When incidents and accidents are rife,
The very breath of so called active life ;
When all things subject to man’s talent seem

Or real problem or ideal dream !
Ah, age so wondrous, it might well inspire
A writer's fancy with poetic fire !
But if it fail to bear me high along
The rolling tide of a successful song,
Pray be your judgments by true kindness led,
Nor blame me, friends, if in my verse is wed,
With *some* things good, *much* better left unsaid.

Some salient points I tenderly will touch,
Some topics talked of, may be, over much,
And yet that have in all this crush and strife
Become attendants of our daily life.
With so called faults, of course, I shall begin,
Because 'tis easy to pitch in to sin.
Interpret this whichever way you please,
With your experience doubtless it agrees.
One great fault is, the age too many creeds
Nourishes and fosters, cherishes and feeds,
When one were ample, if that one were true,
To teach all men the right course to pursue.
But with so many, each man has his pet,
On which his faith devotedly is set, —
Religion's hobby which he loves to ride,
To show the world, with a becoming pride,
How *his* religion is the surest guide.
O, gift of grandads ! Glorious boon, to choose
As we may wish ; this take, or that refuse !
And yet this worship, which we freedom call,
How oft excuses us for none at all !
For none at all ? Please pardon what I say,

There *is one* God omnipotent to-day ;
One God all worship with a love sincere ;
One God at whom no Ingersoll doth sneer ;
One God whose Bible, with its moral rules,
Is not excluded from the public schools ;
One God whom all Sectarians support,
Despite the judgement of Wisconsin court ;
One church not split by theologic strife,
No ancient dogmas tearing at its life.
Mason and Dixon run no boundary line
'Twixt it and heresy ; lovingly combine
Its North and South ; they could fight to free
Or chain the black folks, but on him agree.
No starchy precepts do its morals bind,
Just as the wind its members are confined.
Upon their counters shoddy stands as cloth ;
For Traffic's conscience never has been loth
To try to show a lucky balance sheet,
By what is termed "legitimate deceit."
Whenever fortunes can be quickly made,
Meanness of every form, or style, or grade,
Is christened *holy* by all Boards of Trade.
Gold, glittering gold, thou hast most potent sway,
A wondrous power that all mankind obey !
Before thy throne thy slavish subjects bow,
And with all God-like virtues thee endow.
By thy base worship is all conscience stilled ;
The soul that loves thee, with base love is filled ;
Thou settest up by thy all potent must
The rich man wicked o'er the poor man just,

And even here, in freedoms boasted clime,
Canst buy protection for committed crime.
There is no place within thy costly church
Where pure Benevolence can find a perch.
From cushioned pulpit down to cushioned pew,
Preachers and laymen all belong to you !
Preachers and laymen, deacons, elders all
Crowd round thy altars and Hosannahs bawl.
The Alpha and Omega of thy creed
Is selfishness in every act and deed !

This is thy worship, this its darker side,
But still thy virtues I'll not try to hide.
Loud as we all of us are apt to prate
About the regulation standard hate
Of all that savors of this golden calf,
Still, I believe, this world's successful half
Do not desire to read its epitaph.
With all the failings, follies, faults it brings,
Strifes, vices, crimes, and endless bickerings,
It has its virtues, has a cheerful look,
And speaks this language like a printed book :
“ 'Tis not my fault if people will not learn
The way that honest people me should earn ;
Nor mine the fault if they will not befriend
Their suffering brothers, learning how to spend ;
The good I could do lieth all about,
And why this secret do they not find out ?
Yet were I asked, and could my thought give speech,
With pennies for a text I thus might preach ;

“ ‘ Gather them up and scatter them kindly,
Many a beggar will thank the for one ;
Many a fortune ye’re seeking so blindly
From sources as trivial as this was begun.
Gather them up, but not for the rusting
Of the pile safely guarded by padlock and chain,
But gather and give them, and wisely be trusting
That treasure so scattered will come back again.

‘ Gather them up, though the world call thee miser,
To see thee so careful to find every *cent* ;
Gather and give them, and it will grow wiser
And better we hope ere you have all them spent.
Gather them up wherever they offer,
By plough or by anvil, in desk, or in stall ;
Gather and give them, despite of the scoffer,
And time will repay thee for each and for all.

‘ Kindness to those who may chance to need any,
In the smoothest of coppers may be shown by you ;
Gather them then, no matter how many,
For the more that you have the more you may do.
Mites though they are in the bucket of treasure,
Scorn not the trifles, but bless them, for aye,
Much they can win thee of Heaven’s own pleasure,
If only you get them and give them away.’ ”

Thus can I fancy gold’s good spirit could
Preach to the world a sermon if it would ;
And more, it might, with a deserving pride
Point to its better deeds on every side,
The far extended interlacing bands,

Making as one a multitude of lands,
The sails of ships that whiten every sea,
Bearing the products of man's industry,
The many comforts that we little heed,
The bread it buys for those who are in need, —
These and a million charities untold
Should hallow somewhat all this lust for gold.

O useful trio, learned professions three,
Of law, of physic and divinity,
Perhaps deservedly a word or too,
Of harmless satire might be said to you !
The preachers first, a very motley throng,
Come crowding through the avenues of song.
Upon their charts so many routes are given,
O, who can guess the surest one to Heaven ?
Each one is advertised as perfect guide,
A soul-preserver, if believed and tried,
That can buoy up the firm believing soul
And float it safely to the destined goal.
I do not doubt. I am afraid of doubt,
It leaves so little while it rubs faith out,
And though it finds in much a seeming lie,
It fails with truth the vacuum to supply.
And yet, 'tis honest frankness prompts my speech,
I can not help distrusting some who preach.
With all this eloquence that fills the land,
I must confess I can not understand
Why, what Christ taught His followers to do,
Must be in words and not in practice too.
Thus I confound the wicked with the good,

And mix them up in common brotherhood.
Thus watching works, by which saint-souls are known,
Sometimes I think I'm risking much my own.

Is this my fault? Am I in this alone?
Speak out dear deacon, let the truth be known;
Have you not often, sort of on the sly,
Just let black venom at your pastor fly?
Just let your tattling, lying, meddling tongue
Pour on him libel till his heart was wrung,
Until he had to, driven to the wall
As you had planned it, seek another call?
Ah, Deacon, Deacon! when I hear you prate
About some wretched sinner's awful fate,
I can not help but doubt if even you
Are really safe when judged by what you do!
With mind so eager to detect a flaw,
And track transgressions of the moral law,
Who has so many proverbs learned by rote,
And can on all occasions Bible quote,
And yet, whose conduct; — well, I must not judge,
But, Deacon, kindly let me lightly nudge
Your understanding; may be over there
You too will find that deeds must match with prayer!

We ask too much of preachers, that's a fact,
And weigh their virtues, wisdom too exact.
Woe be to one who gives a nasal twang
On Sabbath day to psalm, hymn, or harrangue!
Woe be to one who shrewdly hunts for call
To preach where salary is not so small!

Thus act the churches ; save the noted few,
Who pay for preaching as they ought to do ;
Who keep in view this utterance to inspire,
“ The laborer is worthy of his hire.”

I do not think this pinched and doled out tax
Has ever broken many pious backs ;
And yet you'll find in almost every town
The churches' fiscal agents paring down
The paltry pittance to the preacher paid,
As if they were, for love of God, afraid
That he would dodge his duty to exhort,
No matter though his groceries fall short !
Their model preacher must despise all pelf,
And though he preach for nothing, — board himself.

A jealous mistress of a jealous crowd,
With wondrous attributes specially endowed,
To keep all rogues in safety or in awe,
Comes learning's hand-maid, world-embracing Law !
Beneath her broad and wide extended wing
She'll brood, for a retainer, anything.
She'll champion nobly innocence that bleeds,
Or stand a bulwark for crime's sinful deeds.
To champion right should be her special care,
And yet injustice never needs despair,
For she can make a jury disagree,
And let the guilty, if she wills, go free.
By dint of cash, or an attorney's tongue,
The world is full of murderers unhung ;
If law and proof are wanting in the case,
The lawyer dons his made-to-order face,

Puts on at least a well-affected zeal,
And as he's paid to, thus he feigns to feel.
Justice with him is measured by a fee,
Its size denoting what it ought to be.
For a set price, ah ! must I speak it out ?
He'll find in books the precedents no doubt
Which prove that murder is an awful crime,
Or something that is really sublime.
His fees denote how earnestly he tries
To lift the scales from troubled jurors' eyes ;
With words pathetic, eloquent, or rash,
He makes the Court House rafters ring — for cash !

The last profession of the glorious three ;
Is that which tinkers — human misery.
Mending his fractures, healing wounds and pains,
Man's lasting love the Doctor shrewd retains.
All sorts of practice ! Let the sick rejoice !
From 'mong so many wisely make a choice,
And do not doubt but any choice will do,
If the disease is one that *can* pull through ;
But if you get, as sometime be assured
You will, a malady that *can't* be cured,
In that case, then, I speak with bated breath,
In the grim presence of impending Death,
In that case, shall I tell you, as a friend,
Which school to tie to as you near the end ?
Well, since you ask it, modest wisdom hath
Some doubt, e'en then, which is the surest "path."

But now to realm of Books ! A broader field
Spreads out its treasures in abundant yield,
A yield as plentiful as common dirt,
And in the main as stupid and inert,
But yet crammed full of nuggets, prose and rhyme,
Some worth ten dollars and some not a dime.
Herculean task to be a guide-board here,
To try to make the proper highway clear,
To try to tell which rhymster will succeed,
Or which last novel is the one to read !
No hand would dare to single out a name,
And say, " here's one was never booked for fame,"
But yet, perhaps it may be safe to say,
This fact to readers patent is to-day,
That writers ought to interest us more,
Or else prompt give their " nack o' writing " o'er.
And first the Poet, is there reason why
His thoughts persistently should rhyme with sigh ?
Great as his own grief to himself may seem,
To all save him it is a trifling theme.
His wild devotion to some pretty girl,
That puts his love-struck senses in a whirl,
Although 'tis well, perhaps, that she should hear,
Is quite insipid to anothers ear.
O, let him love, but do it with less fuss,
For it is not such awful thing to us
Who've lived and loved, perhaps, as well as he,
And in due season married happily.
Why should his love-griefs overshadow quite
All that the earth presents him that is bright ?

Poems of passion that have rapture's glint
Should not be colored with such gruesome tint.
Should not a real Sally, Kate or Jane
These rhymes of passion regulate, restrain?
Is there no great elixir that can cheer
And cure such madness, tho' it be sincere?
O, dear young writers, can you not beguile
Fate's stern decrees, and learn to jest and smile?
Do you not see that Nasby, Ward and Nye
Can open hearts with humor for a pry?
Do you not know that Nature does not groan,
And that a laugh is better than a moan?
Do you not know the sentiment that wets
Your callow eyes stupidity begets?

Need I repeat, what probably you know,
In making books the best rule is — go slow?
Be not too hasty to appear in print;
This, budding author, is a useful hint;
'Twill save you from those bitter pangs untold,
An empty pocket and a book unsold.
Remember this, no publisher will try
To sell what he's not fool enough to buy;
And when an author at his own expense
Brings out his book, the trade says "lack of sense!"

Wanted, a Poet! One that can go o'er
Some other track than that well trod before;
An independent thinker, who dares look
With honest eyes into dame Nature's book;
Who is no abject slave to foreign rules;

Who apes no practice of established schools ;
Who studies not so much the standard books,
As his own country's mountains, lakes and brooks ;
Whose song is not an echo, but a peal
Fresh, clear and ringing which our hearts can feel.
Wanted, much wanted, who's the lucky man ?
The chance stands open, fill it if you can.

Where will it stop, and echo answers, where ?
This book-miasma that infects the air,
So very like a western ague chill,
Though it be checked, 'tis in the system still,
And will come back, despite the dose we take,
Sooner or later to renew the shake,
And like this Russian pestilence " La Grippe,"
Make bitterer havoc on its second trip.
Although the public stubbornly express
Its stern contempt for printed silliness,
There is no let-up to the ceaseless flow
Of useless waters ; on and on they go
Toward the maelstrom which engulfs at last
The hopes, ambitions of armada vast,
That steering critics, whether pro or con,
Can't keep from landing in oblivion.

But may I not in candor now advise
The earnest worker where the treasure lies ?
Explain and tell him when, and where, and how,
In soil prolific he should set his plow ?
Here's a recipe ; 'tis surely short and terse :
Take grim Monopoly, that awful curse,

That sinful thing the demagogue depicts,
For the main plot, the lumber and the bricks ;
With such foundation upon which to build,
Then let the plot, the inside work, be filled
With wrongs of workingmen, all false, but, well,
What matters that, we're making books to sell !

But why be captious ? Why be finding fault ?
Why lead on Duncedom so forlorn assault ?
Suppose pens write now not for fame, but pay,
Should you find fault, you willing victims, say ?
Is it not true that as the public craves
The feast is spread ? Are writers not its slaves ?
Is cash the motive power that drives along
The slow prose wagon and the car of song ?
Well, what of that ? O readers, are you blind ?
Don't writers do their best to fit your mind ?
Weak though perhaps the stuff may be you read,
'Tis after all, my friends, the sort of feed
Which you love best, and upon which you thrive,
And keep your love of literature alive.
Suppose the book is flashy, flimsy, low,
Dear reader, tell me frankly, don't you know
That these objections, which at first may strike,
Your mind absorbs and rather seems to like ?
Books are like buoys, mere signals o'er a whim
Some readers have ; just neck-and-neck they swim ;
Instead of boldly trying to direct
The public mind, or teach it to reflect,
They pet its errors, cater to its crimes,
Then boast exultant of aesthetic times !

And yet the fact remains that real worth
Has never been a drug upon the earth ;
But though deserving fortune's best rewards,
Is often paid with commonest regards.
The popular applaud doth seldom last ;
It rises rapidly, flows fierce and fast,
Fills every sluiceway, every mental flume,
And yet at last runs out, a "busted boom !"
The book that feeds to-day its prejudice,
To-morrow may receive its loudest hiss.
So long as to its foibles you bend,
This mighty public is a generous friend,
And spares nor gifts nor words nor great parade,
To prove your trust will never be betrayed.
But if it needs, speak chidings in its ear,
And you will quickly find 'tis not sincere,
But that, remorseless evermore as fate,
It can in place of friendship offer hate.

When will the time come when our authors dare
Their true convictions honestly declare ?
When in this trade of making books will they
Speak out because they something haveⁿ to say ?
When shall they seek like students for the truth,
And when they print care not for public ruth ?
When in their workshops shall the frames be wrought,
The pure ideals of true, sterling, thought ?
Why ask how long the follies of to-day
Shall bear the flags of victory away ?
Frivolity is now enthroned in state,
And old-time wisdom makes a plagiarist great.

Steal? Yes, no matter, Fame excuses it.
The fellow stolen from had not the wit
To work his mine, so Darwin harpies give,
This plea for plunder ; let the fittest live !
Genius like beauty is at best skin-deep,
On surface sparkle, but at heart asleep.
Talent is politic and shrewdly swims
In-shore, long-side of Nature's minnie whims ;
The deeper waters it doth seldom reach ;
It gathers pebbles on a shallow beach,
And, dreading billows that it fears to stem,
It finds no pearls by diving after them.

And yet 'tis promised us in "Looking Back,"
That soon, in place of all this weary wrack,
Will come a time when everybody's cares
And even pleasures shall be held on shares,
A movement national of wisdom keen,
Making each one a part of the machine,
Which gives each brow at least its share of wreath,
And pensions all who've once been born and breathe.
Adjusting wants by overseeing care,
Land, stock and houses all put in with air ;
No matter what, or clothing, boarding, gold,
Health, marriage, brains and even courage bold,
Contentment, happiness, or gift of song,
Fresh summer suits, or chains to hamper wrong,
First class physicians kept in stock for pains,
And silk umbrellas ready when it rains,
Sermons or speeches, opera or dance,
Essays on culture, Haggard's last romance,

All furnished gratis by this social Trust,
The best of sweetcake made from moldy crust,
Infant perfection by a statute fixed,
So, if perchance the midgets should get mixed,
They'll be so like, by dint of social fads,
There'll be no end of hunting up their dads.
Just like a clock the dear old world will go,
The time kept perfect, not too fast or slow.
When by these social architects 'tis wound
Up tight, 'twill run forever, round and round,
Making all happy, bringing unto all
The precious fruitage lost in Adam's fall,
When every sting extracted is from work,
When good back-aching none will try to shirk,
When from each homestead shall extend the wires
That reach to bins chock-full of hearts' desires,
Which each can have, exclusively his own,
By sending orders up by telephone,
No matter what is wanted, all, or one,
Just touch a button and the thing is done !

Thus, friends, I've hinted along various lines
How Humbug chemically with sense combines,
And leads us willing votaries by the nose,
Wherever labeled as "Reform" it goes.
This much seems certain, Fourier or Fate
Is getting ready fast to ope the gate
Of the Millenium ; may that gladsome day
Be quick in coming and, when once here, stay !

THE PICTURE.

Was the picture a good one? We took it and scanned it.

We examined it closely, each feature and line,
And from one to the other we critically hand it,
And the judgement of all was, "a picture divine."

No fault could be found ; not a flaw was detected ;
The features were perfect, complexion was clear ;
A great soul within had the skilled brush reflected,
A soul that was earnest, devoted, sincere.

Not firm was the mouth set, but seemed to be smiling,
As if it might do something more than to eat,
As if it might open in wondrous beguiling,
And speak unto hungry souls words that were sweet.

But, as 'tis well known, these are difficult guesses,
From a portrait to tell what may character be ;
And though it seem noble, truth meekly confesses
The face with good action don't always agree.

So we, thus admiring, as blind as a lover,
Perfect eyes, perfect face, perfect head as a whole,
Recalled past acquaintance when we did discover
How much she was lacking perfectness of soul.

One could hardly believe, with features so smiling
Which seemed to show clearly outcropping of gold
That this was but semblance, a surface beguiling,
With all underneath it proud, heartless and cold.

No vestige of love or of human compassion,
For suffering sisters not even a tear ;
Mere selfishness glazed with the burnish of fashion,
Rank heartlessness hid 'neath a rosy veneer.

So why should we love it, admire it, or frame it,
Why give it 'mong paintings desirable room?
A face without soul, they who know it may name it,
A flower without beauty despite of its bloom.

TO CROESUS.

Ah ! indeed 'twould seem like Heaven,
If into your life the leaven
Of kind act was thrown,
If your mind would show it ever
Made one earnest grand endeavor
Not for self alone,
But for others ! How delighted,
Though perhaps a bit affrighted
At this change of self,
Would be all your many neighbors,
Could they see that all your labors,
Were not just for pelf ;
If you should some day, suspending
Tricks of trade, be wisely lending
Thought to nobler end !
'Tis a fact ; no one can doubt it ;
There's no question, Sir, about it,
Should your habits mend,
Should you cease to wear the collar,
Of the all-absorbing Dollar,
It would sure portend
Yet another sign from Heaven,
That the last plague of the Seven
Hastened to its end ;

That world sorceries were ending ;
That old Time the graves was rending ;
That the Hour had come ;
Sign to be denied by no men ;
In the business sky an omen,
Of Millennium !

“ And the sea gave up the dead which were in it ; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them.”—*Rev. XX, 13.*

OLD LETTERS.

Read them, if only to bring back the past

Once more, with its friends and friendships to view,
From out of the shadow which old Time has cast

O'er first dreams of happiness, earnest and true.

Read them, though age may have wrinkled your brow,

And sprinkled your hair with its ribbons of gray,

Though broken the promise of happiness now,

Links that are left of it surely are they.

Read them, your heart must be terribly cold

And hardened withal, if it feels not a thrill

Of regret for a love so tenderly told,

And whose place in your breast another may fill.

Read them, though much of their passionate feeling

May seem to you now very much overdone.

Think how they once weekly reached you, revealing

What seemed then the sweetest thing under the sun.

Read them while memory, lifting the veil,

Shows you the past in their pages of yellow.

Trace in the fading lines laughable tale,

How in those days you were quite an Othello,

Jealous of her who you thought was so dear,

Jealous of John if he slyly looked at her.

Ah! from your standpoint of sixty how clear

Now you can see just what then was the matter.

Read them, heart records of tenderness past,
Ere your young heart became sullen and crusted,
When you thought comfort was something would last,
And human pledges and banks could be trusted,
Ere you had learned by experience sore
How all things human are given to lying,
When the dear being you'd vowed to adore
Seemed not a girl, but a goddess undying.

Read them, your heart it indeed must have grown
Stupidly dull, or as iceberg as chilling,
If the remembrance of joys it hath known
In the old days of your cooing and billing
Does not return to enchant as you read.
How your cold heart will expand to the comer,
Giving to sentiment rapture indeed,
Breathing on winter time breath of the summer.

What though the halo hath lifted that hung
Over the head of your youth's adoration,
What though the music that fell from her tongue,
Turned into ashes in life's hot cremation,
What though she jilted you finally, and
Married that coarse fellow, John, for his money,
Why did you not, as strict customs demand,
Give back her letters? Now isn't it funny?

But as you go down the mountain of life,
As to the foot you come nearer and nearer,
Even at risk of a sneer from your wife,
Read them all over, that clearer and clearer

It may appear to you, ere you depart
 Over the Styx with the ferryman Charon,
 How nicely Time patches rents of the heart
 That once made your life seem so worthless and barren.

Ah ! there he stands in his tossing canoe !
 Just a few moments more, then you'll be going, —
 Going to take up a residence new,
 Over the dark river steadily flowing !
 Going ! but ere you have stepped from the shore,
 Mem'ry, that sticks to one close as a brother,
 Prompts you, and lo ! in these letters once more,
 Flashes the flame that no deluge can smother.

Is it not strange that, when stripped of them all,
 All the mere baubles of life we've been stringing,
 Some little echo, some musical call,
 Out of some long-buried memory is springing ?
 Is it not strange that, as sadly we go,
 Grasping the ferryman's hand with a shiver,
 Words from old letters should shed such a glow
 Over the gloom of that desolate river ?

"ACCEPTED."

Before him lay the wondrous pile ;
His was the Critic's mill to grind it ;
He had stood guard for Taste long while,
And if there was good grain could find it.
All sorts of poems there did wait
To get his candid wise opinion,
Poems of war, of anger, hate,
And of love's old but sweet dominion,
On spring, on youth, on friendship too,
On every thing from A to Izzard,
From Noah's flood down through and through
All sorts of storm to latest blizzard.
Ah ! how his pencil young hopes dashed,
As on each one he sentence uttered !
How he, a fiendish goblin, smashed
Ambitious dreams that flamed and fluttered !
And was there nothing really good,
No sober sense, no key to laughter ?
When once *he* damned, 'twas understood,
That poem never peeped thereafter.
And so down through the wondrous pile
He goes, the bottom slowly nearing,
Till an appreciative smile
At last is on his face appearing ;
The merit, that his fingers touch,
Is that which now is all the fashion,
Which hungry readers crave so much,
Lust posing as a virtuous passion !

FUDGE'S FANNING MILL.

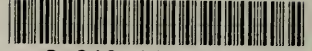
Misther Editur, Sur, I musth tell ye, be Jabers,
Wun Statesmon there is whom no nonsinse kin budge ;
Wun Statesmon whose shining beats kerosene tapers,
An' if ye asks, " Who " ? I must tell ye, 'tis Fudge !
He's the mon for us all in these momunts of tightness,
Whin the dhrouth is upon all our pasthures and fields,
Whin there's divil a bit in the sky of pure brightness,
An anguish and sorrer mosht iv'ry thing yields.
Tis divartin, indade, but, of coorse, more surprisin',
That a Statesmon kin promise sich wonderful things,
A Statesmon who, jist like a yeast-cake, is risin',
Or dacent fresh eagle jist tryin his wings ;
But he did it himself, he wrote every letther
Ov the platform he stands on so proudly this fall ;
Life and liberty pledged us, and, faith, what is betther,
Sum property, too, unto each and to all !
What more cud we ask than these three things united ?
Life, liberty, property, these are enuff
To make iviry vother, who lacks them, delighted ;
Ould Gladstone himself couldn't pledge betther stuff !
An more, he declares if an emmigrant broother,
Or cousin fresh over an jist a bit raw,
Shud offer in market sum hair with his boother,
He'd prop such industry by high tariff law.

He says, so discrately, tis right to be cruel
To villains who mix up pure suet and lard
An sell it for boother, but boording-house gruel
He thinks that no statoot cud legally guard.
The rich he wud larrup ; to reach 'em he'd bust things ;
The poor he'd protect, not the wearers of silk ;
He'd hang on a gibbet all members of trust rings,
But coddle the milkman who wathers his milk.
Jist right, he belaves that the rich are all vices,
Jist right, he belaves that the poor are all saints,
That money a pest is that always entices,
An saps the foundation of Virtue, an taints.
He'd throttle the tyrants that long have enchained us,
The ralerodes that crush all true happiness out ;
From Congressional clouds such showers shall be rained us
That every seed that is planted shall sprout.
He'd put all the taxes on land by the acre,
Thus tweaking the noses of insolent few
Who've gobbled the soil which was made by the Maker
To be jist as free as the air or the dew.
Though he can't tell exactly jist how he will do it,
By the square rule of George he has faith 'twill be done,
An' thin "Looking Backward" all fools will see through it,
An' marvel such deeds were not sooner begun.
First blow on the anvil of Bellamy's forgin',
In statesmonlike grandeur how little it lacks !
Makin Capital see by this rueful disgorgin
How plunder's made righteous by means of a tax.
He'd straighten by law ivery crooked intintion
To make a hired mon earn as much as he's paid,

An fix it by means of the law's intervintion,
So nayther side gets the best holt in a trade.
Not a single distress is, by gor, he don't tackle,
At nothing his statesmon philanthropy stops ;
He seems born a purpose all chains to unshackle,
To git us high prices an wonderful crops !
Last night at the club on the corner he spake it :
" The time is fast coming so sinful 'twill be
To have a red sint, that the law will say ' Take it ! '
Yes, take an divide, tis the public decree ! "
Whin the laborer has it so none kin gain-say him
Six hours is long enough work-day for men ; —
But binding his godless employers to pay him
A price to be fixed on a basis of ten.
Thus out of earth's robbers comes help to the needy,
Division of wealth is a card that will draw,
An all the waste places kin never get weedy
Whin hoed an kept clane by a partnership law. "
Lord thin, with hats off, how the listeners shouted !
It seemed by the noise they had Dives by the throat ;
In a crowd that worked never this fact seemed undoubted,
Not one but knew jist how true labor shud vote.
Not one but talked loud about wrongs of his neighbor,
Not one but by tyrants seemed sorely oppressed,
To hear them so glibly apostrophize Labor,
This fact by their accents cud never be guessed,
That divil a one of them worked for a living,
Their chief occupation bein loafin about
Attindin sum corcus, or windily givin
Free counsel to statesmen perplexed or in doubt.

Mighty foine is the glow in me heart for belavin
That niver before did a candidate guess
How sthrong, in the stomach of man, is the cravin
For dose homeopathic to aise its distress.
We've suffered so long from distempers distressin,
The dose which he offers seems wonderful swate ;
Saint Pathrick himself niver fashioned a blessin
More soothin for colic an gripings of State.
Och ! the beautiful day that so swately is dawnin,
So full of clear light an so burdened with aise,
Whin backs will not bent be from workin or fawnin,
Whin wealth that is hoarded the fiddlin pays,
Whin the gates shall be opened that leads to contintment,
Whin wages go on though the laborer sits !
Thin surely must cease all disturbin resintment,
An' the lions an lambs be as social as nits ;
Indade ! it will be cause for grand jubilation,
Whin the winds shall by statoot be ordered to trudge,
Whin all sorts of chaff shall be blown from the Nation
By Fanning-mill framed by the wisdom of Fudge !

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